

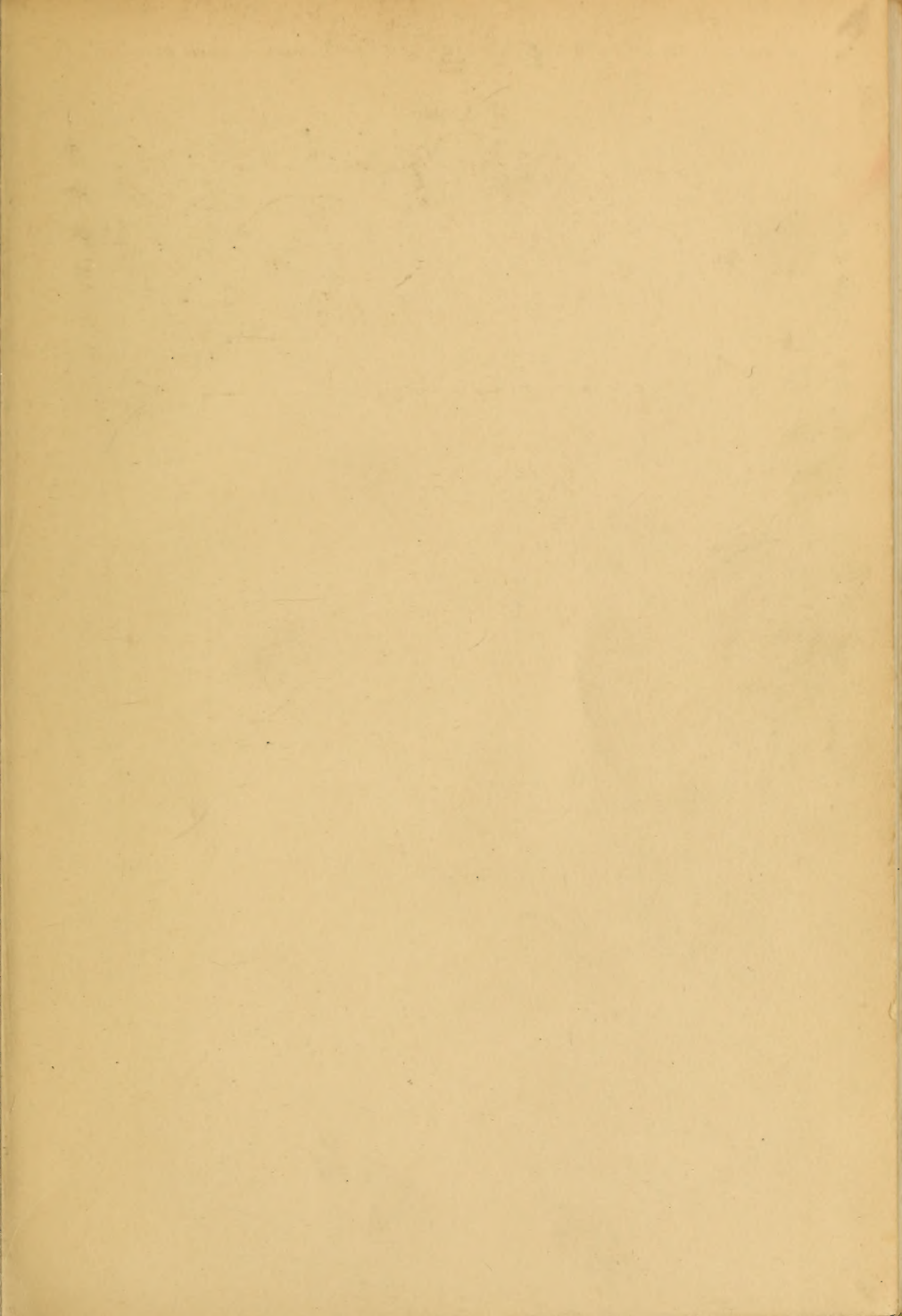
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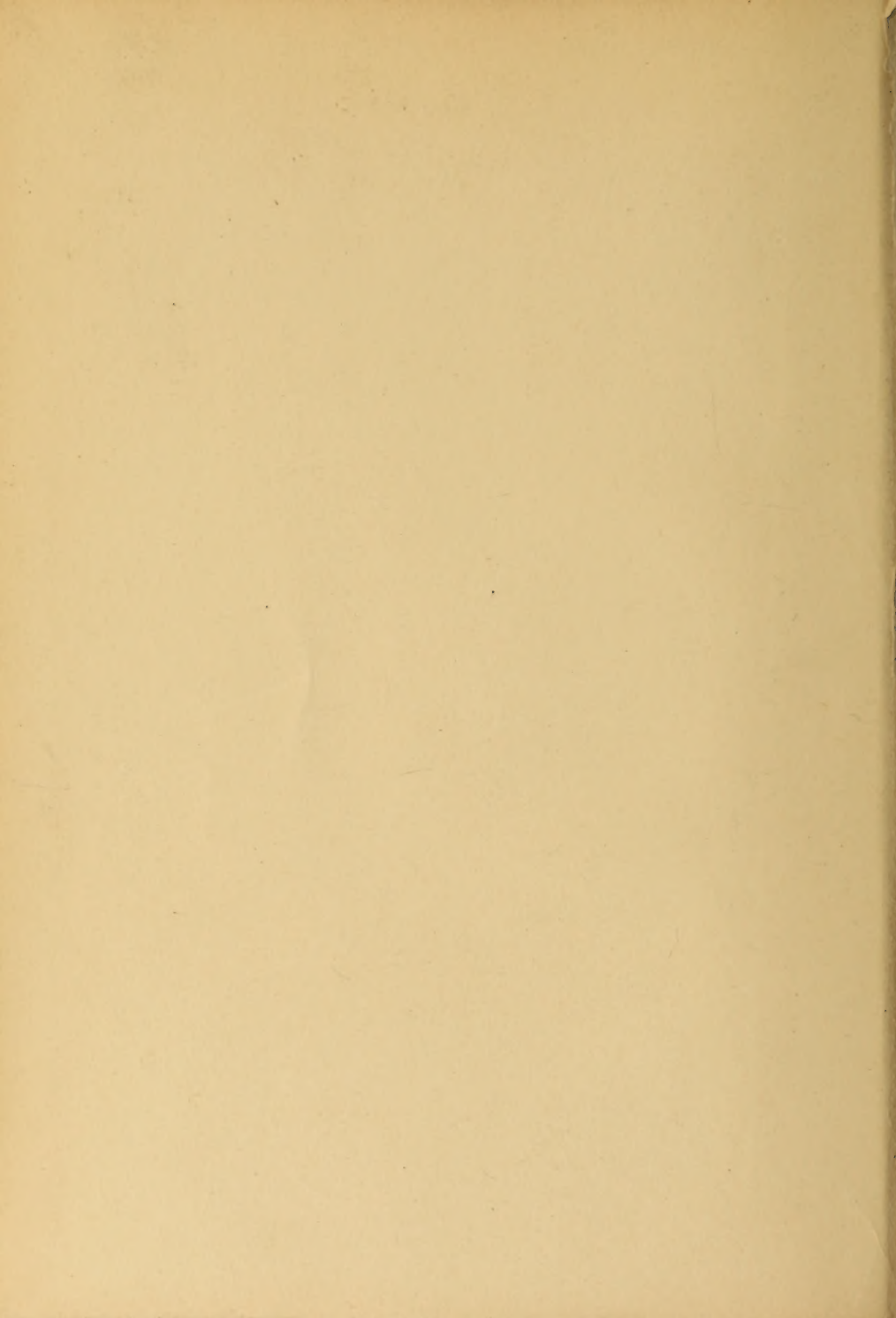
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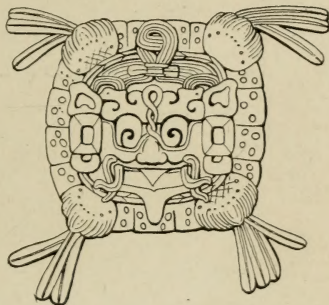
FUNERARY URN FROM A ZAPOTECAN TOMB

The cylindrical urn is concealed behind the human figure. The dress of the human figure consists of a cape, apron and a widespreading headdress. Over the face is worn a mask.

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ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS  
OF  
MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA



By HERBERT J. SPINDEN  
ASSISTANT CURATOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY

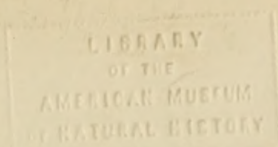
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## PREFACE

**T**HIS little book is intended as a general commentary and explanation of the more important phases of the ancient life and arts of the Indians of Mexico and Central America, and especially of their history. The substance of it is drawn from many sources, for the anthropologist must mould together and harmonize the gross results of several sciences. Archæology, ethnology, somatology, and linguistics all make their special contributions and we are only on the threshold of our subject. In the Mexican and Central American field we find the accumulated writings that result from four hundred years of European contact with the Indians and in addition a mass of native documents and monumental inscriptions expressed in several hieroglyphic systems.

The general method of this book will be to take up in order the recognized "horizons" of pre-Columbian history, beginning with the earliest of which we have knowledge. In relation to each horizon we will examine the records and discuss the principal developments in arts, beliefs, and social structures. The introductory chapter is designed to put before the reader such facts as may be necessary for a ready understanding of the discussions and explanations that will follow.

The Mexican Hall of the American Museum of Natural History furnishes illustrations of most of the facts given herewith. This Hall contains both originals and casts brought together by various expeditions of the Museum and of other scientific institutions. The principal patrons of science whose names should be mentioned in connection with the upbuilding of these

collections are: Willard Brown, Austin Corbin, R. P. Doremus, Anson W. Hard, Archer M. Huntington, Morris K. Jesup, James H. Jones, Minor C. Keith, the Duke de Loubat, William Mack, Henry Marquand, Dr. William Pepper, A. D. Straus, I. McL. Strong, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Henry Villard, William C. Whitney. But thanks are also due to innumerable persons who have contributed single specimens and small collections as well as those who have placed information at the disposal of the scientific staff. The principal collectors have been: George Byron Gordon, Aleš Hrdlička, Carl Lumholtz, Francis C. Nicholas, Marshall H. Saville, and Eduard Seler.



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## INTRODUCTION

**Geography and Natural Environment.** Unfortunately the terms "Mexico and Central America" are not mutually exclusive. Central America is a natural division comprised between the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and the Isthmus of Panama. Mexico is a political division that includes several states in Central America, namely, Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatan, and the territory of Quintana Roo. The ancient high cultures of Mexico hardly extended as far north as the Tropic of Cancer and the region beyond this is of slight interest to us. Positions south of Mexico will often be referred to the areas of the modern political units although these have no immediate relation to pre-Spanish conditions. These political units are: Guatemala, British Honduras, Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

Although lying within the tropics, the territory extending from the Isthmus of Panama to Central Mexico exhibits great extremes of climate and topography and hence of plant and animal life. The year is everywhere divided into a wet and a dry season but the relative duration of each depends upon land form and altitude. The coast of the Pacific is considerably drier than that of the Atlantic. Three climatic zones are generally recognized, namely, the *Tierra Caliente* (Hot Land),

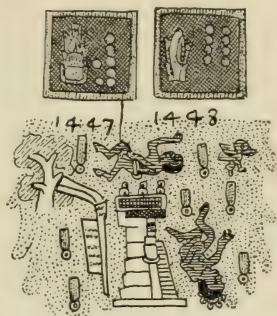


Fig. 1. The Great Snowstorm of 1447 shown in the Pictographic Record of the Aztecs called Codex Telleriano Remensis.

*Tierra Templada* (Temperate Land), and *Tierra Fria* (Cold Land), and in some regions each of these has an arid and a humid strip. The change from luxuriant forests to open thorny deserts is often very sudden. On the high plateau or *Tierra Fria* the natural warmth of the latitude is largely overcome by the altitude. In the Valley of Mexico snow falls only at rare intervals yet chilling winds are common in the winter. Much of the plateau from Mexico south into Guatemala is open farming land well suited to the raising of maize and wheat where water is sufficient. The shoulders of the mountains bear forests of pine and oak while the highest peaks are crowned with perpetual snow.

A description of the mountains, rivers, and lakes will help towards an understanding of the problems that are before us. The broad plateau, crossed by irregular ranges of mountains, that occupies the states of New Mexico and Arizona continues far south into Mexico. On the western rim the Sierra Madre lifts a great pine-covered barrier, beyond which the land drops off quickly into the hot fringe of coastal plain bordering the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of California. The highest mountains of the western Sierra Madre are El Nevado and Colima, the first a snowy peak 14,370 feet high and the second an active volcano 12,278 feet high. On the western rim of the central plateau the second Sierra Madre is less continuous but it culminates in the loftiest peak of all Mexico—the wonderful cone of Orizaba. This mountain rises from the tropical jungles well into the region of perpetual snow and attains an elevation of 18,314 feet above the sea. Its name in Aztec is Citlaltepētl, which means Star Mountain. Two other famous peaks of Mexico are Popocatepētl and Iztacchihuitl, both names being pure Aztec. The first means Smoking Mountain and the second



[a]



[b]

Plate I. (a) Village Scene in Arid Mexico. Cactus and other thorny shrubs are ever present. The houses of the natives are of adobe with thatched roofs. (b) In the Humid Lowlands. The view shows part of the plaza at Quirigua with one of the monuments almost concealed in vegetation of a few months' growth.



White Woman. These volcanic crests rise into the snowy zone from the table-land which is itself about 8,000 feet above the sea.

In southern Mexico the plateau area enclosed between the principal sierras narrows perceptibly, because the shore line of the Pacific and the mountain range that parallels it swing more and more towards the east. At the Isthmus of Tehuantepec a low valley separates the highland area of Mexico from that of Central America. This second table-land is not so wide as the one we have just considered and is more deeply dissected by rivers. The mountains of Guatemala rise to a considerable altitude, the highest being Tacana with 13,976 feet elevation. Active volcanoes are numerous and earthquakes frequent and often disastrous. The Volcan de Agua and the Volcan de Fuego (Volcano of



Fig. 2. The Smoke reaches the Stars, a Mexican Picture of a Volcanic Eruption in the Codex Telleriano Remensis.

Water and Volcano of Fire) look down upon Ciudad Vieja and Antigua Guatemala, the old Spanish capitals which each in turn destroyed. The cordillera still presents its most abrupt front to the Pacific and on the eastern side, in Guatemala and Honduras, there are high forest-bearing ridges between the river systems. The Cockscomb Mountains in British Honduras are a low outlying group. In southern Nicaragua the main chain is broken by a low broad valley that extends from ocean to ocean. In Costa Rica and Panama a single range stretches midway along the narrow strip of land, with peaks that rise above 11,000 feet.



The lowlands on the Pacific side of our area form a narrow fringe which becomes more valuable for agricultural purposes as we proceed towards the south. The lowlands of the Atlantic side are of varying widths. The greatest land mass of uniformly low elevation is the Peninsula of Yucatan. In eastern Honduras and Nicaragua there are extensive river valleys of low elevation.

The river systems of Mexico and Central America flow into the two bounding oceans or into lakes which have no outlets. Several closed basins occur on the Mexican table-land. The Rio Nazas and the Rio Nieves flow into salt marshes in the northern state of Coahuila. But the most important interior basin is the Valley of Mexico. In this mountain enclosed valley, whose general level is 7,500 feet above the sea, there are five lakes which in order from north to south are named Tzompanco, Xaltocan, Tezcoco, Xochimilco, and Chalco. The last two contain fresh water, since they drain into Lake Tezcoco, but the rest are more or less brackish. Lake Tezcoco is by far the largest although its area has been greatly reduced by natural and artificial causes since the coming of the Spaniards.

The largest river of Mexico is the Rio Lerma which takes the name Rio de Santiago during its deep and tortuous passage from Lake Chapala to the Pacific. Farther to the south is the Rio de las Balsas which likewise flows into the western ocean. The name means "River of the Rafts" and is given because of a peculiar floating apparatus made of gourds tied to a wooden framework that is used on this stream. Flowing into the Gulf of Mexico are several large streams, among which may be mentioned the Panuco, Alvarado, Grijalva, and Usumacinta. The last is by far the greatest in volume of water, and with its maze of tributaries

drains a large area of swamp and jungle in which are buried some of the most wonderful ruined cities of the New World.

In the northern part of Yucatan there are no rivers on the surface on account of the porous limestone. Instead there are great natural wells called *cenotes* where the roofs of subterranean rivers have fallen in. Many of the ancient cities were built near such natural wells.

Passing to the south the most important river of Guatemala is the Motagua, which has cut a fine valley through a region of lofty mountains. In Honduras there are several large rivers, including the Uloa, Patuca, and Segovia. The lake region of Nicaragua is drained by the San Juan River that flows into the Caribbean Sea. Nearly all the streams of Central America that flow into the Pacific are short and steep torrents. An important exception is the Lempa River that forms part of the interior boundary of Salvador.

Concerning lakes, mention has already been made of Chapala and Tezcoco, the most important in Mexico. The former is about fifty miles in length. In the state of Michoacan there are a number of beautiful lakes intimately connected with the history and mythology of the Tarascan Indians. The most famous is called Patzcuaro. In southern Yucatan the shallow body of water known as Lake Peten also has a distinct historical interest. Several lakes in Guatemala are well known on account of the rare beauty of their situation. Lake Atitlan is surrounded by lofty mountains, and Lake Izabal, or Golfo Dulce, is famous for the luxuriance of the vegetation that screens its banks. Lakes Nicaragua and Managua are well known on account of their connection with the much-discussed canal projects.

The Island of Ometepe in Lake Nicaragua bears an active volcano.

In regard to the geology it is only necessary to point out a few of the more important characters. The highlands which bear so many active and quiescent volcanoes naturally show great masses of eruptive rocks, some due to recent action and others much more ancient. Porous tufa is a common material for sculptures in many parts of Mexico and Central America. In other places there are great beds of softer and finer grained material also of volcanic origin. In these places, such as Copan in western Honduras and Mitla in southern Mexico, building in stone received its greatest development. The soft greenish stone of Copan seems to be a solidified mud flow permeated with volcanic ash rather than a true lava flow of melted rock. Limestones are also common and important in the economic development. In some regions there are beds of a hard, blue limestone going back to the Carboniferous epoch. This stone makes an excellent cement after burning. The Peninsula of Yucatan is a great plain of limestone of much more recent formation. Like our own Florida it was once a coral reef which was lifted above the sea by some natural agency. This limestone gets older and more solid as we approach the base of the peninsula but at best is rather porous and coarse-grained.

The fauna and flora present great variation. In the moist lowlands the monkeys play in the tree tops and the jaguar lies in wait for its prey. Alligators and crocodiles infest the rivers and swamps. Two small species of deer and the ocellated turkey are important items in the meat supply of Yucatan, that includes also the iguana, the peccary, and various large rodents. The tapir and manatee are the largest animals of the lowlands but neither seems to have been of great signifi-

cance to the natives. Bats are frequently represented in the ancient art and a bat demon appears in several myths.

Upon the highlands of Mexico the Toltecan deer is still hunted, together with the wild turkey, that is the

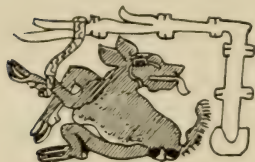


Fig. 3. Yucatan Deer caught in a Snare. From the Mayan Codex, Tro-Cortesianus.

parent of our domestic birds. The turkey was, in fact, domesticated by the Mexican tribes. It probably occurred southward over the Guatemalan highlands but is now extinct in this latter region. In the southern part of Central America the place of the turkey as an item of diet is taken by the curassow, a yellow-crested

bird with black plumage. The coppery-tailed trogon, the famous quetzal, was sacred in ancient times and is now the emblem of Guatemala. This beautiful bird occurs only in the cloud cap forest zone on the high mountains of southern Mexico and Guatemala. Blue macaws, parrots, paroquets, and humming birds contributed their gay plumage to adorn head-dresses and feather-covered cloaks. These and many other birds doubtless flitted about in the aviary of Moctezuma. The black vulture, the king vulture and the harpy eagle are other conspicuous birds often figured in the ancient art. The coyote, *ocelot*, and puma are the principal beasts of prey on the highlands.

Among the characteristic trees of the lowlands may



Fig. 4. The Moan Bird, or Yucatan Owl, personified as a Demi-god. Dresden Codex.



be mentioned the palm, which occurs in great variety, the amate and ceiba, both of which attain to large size, as well as mahogany, Spanish cedar (which is not a cedar at all but a close relative of the mahogany), campeche, or logwood, rosewood, sapodilla, and other trees of commerce. Upon the higher mountain slopes are forests of long-leaf pine and of oak. In the desert stretches the cactus is often tree-like and there are many shrubs that in the brief spring become masses of highly colored blossoms.

Some of the principal crops of Mexico and Central America have been introduced from the Old World, including coffee, sugar cane, and bananas. Other crops such as maize, beans, chili peppers, cocoa, etc., are indigenous. Among the native fruits may be mentioned the *aguacate*, or alligator pear, the mamey, the *anona*, or custard apple, the guanabina, jocote, and nanse.

**History of European Contact.** The great area with which we are concerned has been in touch with Europe since the beginning of the sixteenth century. Columbus on his last voyage in 1502 cast anchor at the mouth of the San Juan River, the outlet of Lake Nicaragua. Later he skirted the shore of Costa Rica and Panama and entered the body of water which was named in his honor Bahia del Almirante—Bay of the Admiral. He brought back sensational news of the gold in possession of the natives, which they had told him came from a district called Veragua. After a few years of stormy warfare the Spaniards established themselves firmly in this golden land. Vasco Nunez de Balboa, who emerged from the bickering mob as the strongest leader, was the first white man to cross the Isthmus. This he did in 1513, grandiloquently laying claim to the Pacific Ocean and all the shores that it touched in the

name of Spain. The crown appointed the greedy and black-hearted Pedrarias Davila governor of Darien and in 1517 he succeeded in having Balboa beheaded on a flimsy charge. Colonization and exploration went forward rapidly. In 1519 the old city of Panama, now in ruins, was founded. The rich region around the Nicaraguan lakes was discovered by Gil Gonzales Davila and the city of Granada was founded in 1524. The exploration from the southern base came in contact with that from the north in Salvador shortly after this event.

Let us now direct our attention to the conquest of Mexico. Perhaps the Portuguese were the first to sight the mainland of Yucatan in 1493. There is little to prove this except one or two charts or maps made in the first decade of the sixteenth century that show the peninsula in its proper location. In 1511 or 1512 a ship from Darien was wrecked and some of the sailors were cast upon the coast of Yucatan. Most were killed and sacrificed but two survived. One of these survivors was Geronimo de Aguilar, who later was rescued by Cortez and became his guide and interpreter.



Fig. 5. Spanish Ship in the Aubin Codex.

The first accredited voyage of discovery to Mexico was one under the command of Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba, which sailed from Cuba in February, 1517. He coasted the northern and eastern shores of Yucatan. When he attempted to obtain water he was worsted in a serious battle with the Maya Indians. His expedition finally returned to Cuba in a sad plight. The next year Juan de Grijalva set out to continue the exploration of the new land with the stone built cities. He landed at



[a]



[b]

Plate II. (a) Site of Pueblo Viejo, the First Capital of Guatemala; (b) A Spanish Church at the village of Camotan on the Road to Copan.

Cozumel Island and took possession. He explored the eastern coast of Yucatan as well as the northern and western ones, discovered the mouth of the large river that bears his name, and proceeded as far as the Island of Sacrifices in the harbor of Vera Cruz.

The next year Hernando Cortez was sent out by Velasquez, the governor of Cuba, to conquer the new land. He landed at Cozumel Island and rescued Geronimo de Aguilar. Then he followed the coast to the mouth of the Grijalva River where he disembarked and fought the important battle of Cintla, the first engagement in the New World in which cavalry was used. After a signal victory Cortez continued his way to Vera Cruz. Here delay and dissension seemed about to break the luck of the invaders.

Although the Mexicans were somewhat inclined to regard the Spaniards as supernatural visitants and to associate their coming with the fabled return of Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent, still Moctezuma refused to grant an interview to Cortez. The Totonacan city of Cempoalan opened its gates and became allies of the invaders. Finally, at the instigation of their stout-hearted captain, the Spaniards destroyed their ships on the shore in order to steel their resolution through the impossibility of retreat. Then the little band of 450 white men with their retinue of natives marched towards the highlands. The route led past Jalapa and over the mountains to the fortified city of Tlascala. This city after a skirmish likewise enlisted in the Spanish cause, a course that came easy because Tlascala was a traditional enemy of Tenochtitlan, the ancient Mexico City, and had withstood the attacks of the Aztecs for many years. From here Cortez passed to the sacred city of Cholula where, suspecting treachery, he caused many of the inhabitants to be massacred.



In the Spanish histories one hears much concerning the omens, the prophecies, and the vain appeals to the gods that became more and more frequent and frantic as the invaders approached the capital. Arriving at



Fig. 6. Cortez arrives with Sword and Cross and Moctezuma brings him Gold. Codex Vaticanus 3738.

as the invaders approached the capital. Arriving at Ixtapalapan they entered upon the great causeway leading out to the Venice-like city in the lake. Accepting the inevitable, Moctezuma and his nobles met the Spaniards and conducted them to the Palace of Axayacatl, which was prepared for their habitation. This took place in

November, 1519. The fears of Moctezuma were soon fulfilled, for he was taken prisoner and held as a hostage of safety in his own capital.

Meanwhile Velasquez, convinced of the unfaithfulness of Cortez, dispatched Narvaez to capture the rebellious agent. But Narvaez was himself captured and his soldiers went to augment the army of the victor.

Alvarado had been left in command of the garrison at Tenochtitlan during the absence of Cortez. The time approached for the great feast of Tezcatlipoca and the Spaniards, fearing the results of this appeal to the principal Aztec god, resolved to be the first to strike. The multitude assembled in the temple enclosure was massacred and after this deed the soldiers fought their way back to the stronghold in which they were quartered. The Aztecs were thoroughly aroused by this unwarranted cruelty as well as by the cupidity of the Spaniards. Cortez hastened back to take personal charge but in spite of victories in the storming of the

pyramids and in other hand-to-hand contests, the invaders were so weakened that their condition was truly alarming. Moctezuma died in captivity and the last restraint of the natives was removed.

The night of June 30, 1520, is famous as *La Noche Triste*—The Sad Night—for on this night the Spaniards attempted to steal out of the city that had become untenable. The natives were warned by a woman's shriek and a desperate encounter took place on the nar-



Fig. 7. Ancient Aztec Canoe. Lienzo de Tezcoco.

row causeway leading to Tlacopan. The bridges were torn down and the Spanish soldiers in armor were hemmed in between the deep canals. At last, however, the firm land was reached. Here, instead of following up the victory, the natives permitted the Spaniards to re-form their ranks. A few days later Cortez was able to restore something of his lost prestige by the decisive victory at Otumba, after which he continued his retreat to the friendly Tlascala.

A year was spent in recuperation, in building boats for an attack from the lake, and in putting down the Aztecan outposts. Finally Tenochtitlan was besieged again. The buildings were leveled with the ground as the Spaniards advanced. The brave defense of Cuauhtemoc availed for naught against cannon and steel armor. On the 13th of August, 1521, the conquest of Tenochtitlan was achieved and the spirit of a warlike people forever broken.

The Valley of Mexico having been taken, numerous expeditions were sent out to subdue the more distant provinces and to establish colonies. Alvarado invaded the south and by 1524 he had captured Utatlan and other native strongholds on the highlands of Guatemala and had invaded Salvador. Cortez himself undertook a wonderful march from Vera Cruz to the Gulf of Honduras to punish an unruly subordinate. His course lay through the swamps and jungles of the Usumacinta basin, thence across the savannahs of southern Yucatan to Lake Peten, and, finally, over the mountains to Lake Izabal and the Motagua River. Even today much of his route would be called impassable for an army. Puerto Cortez, on the northern coast of Honduras, was founded at the conclusion of this expedition. The exploitation of Yucatan and Tabasco was granted to Francisco Montejo, who began the conquest of this lowlying territory in 1527. Soon after entering the country he won a costly victory at Aké and later made his quarters at Chichen Itza. But the odds were too great and by 1535 all the Spaniards had been killed or expelled. The son of Montejo renewed the struggle. In 1540 Campeche was founded and early in 1542 the city of Mérida was established upon the site of an earlier Mayan town.

Progress was also rapid in the north. Nuño de Guz-



[a]



[b]

Plate III. (a) View of the Island Town of Flores in Lake Peten where the Last Capital of the Itzas was located; (b) The Sacred *Cenote* at Chichen Itza into which Human Beings were thrown as Sacrifices.



man departed in 1529 on a mission to conquer Michoacan and the great northern province known as New Galicia. His rule was marred by many acts of cruelty. In 1538 Coronado, the successor of Guzman, led his army northward to the land of the Pueblo Indians and then out into the Great Plains. Before the first English settlement was made in North America the power of Spain was firmly established, not only throughout Central America and Mexico, but also in the southwestern part of the United States.

The spiritual conquest was no less remarkable than the territorial. The priests accompanied and even preceded the armies with the doctrine of the cross. The rough and ready characters that enliven the wonderful drama of this period had the vices of greed and cruelty, but nearly all were imbued with a pride of religion, if not with the true flame. The firmness and bigotry on the one hand and the open sympathy on the other with which the Catholic fathers met the practical problems before them resulted in vast achievements. Either by accident or design certain patron saints and efficacious shrines of special interest to the natives were not long in becoming known. The Virgin of Guadeloupe and the Black Christ of Esquipulas brought many converts to the foreign faith. Church building was carried on apace. The various religious orders became rich and powerful and exerted a strong influence upon civil administration.

The later history of this great region can be passed over briefly. Cortez was the first governor general of Mexico but he was soon shorn of his power as dictator at large. The First Audiencia was appointed in 1528 and is noteworthy simply by reason of its misrule. The Second Audiencia, beginning two years later, put through some excellent reform laws. The first Viceroy,

the great and good Mendoza, arrived in 1535 and for fifteen years the land prospered under his rule, which was benign without being weak. He was succeeded by Luis de Velasco, who emancipated many of the enslaved Indians. The long line of viceroys continued until 1821 when Spain was forced to relinquish her provinces in America. Among the greatest of the viceroys was Bucareli, the forty-sixth in line, who ruled Mexico from 1771-1779 while the United States of America were just beginning to feel the pulse of life.

During the viceregal period in Mexico the region to the south was ruled by the captain general of Guatemala. The dominion was subdivided into five departments corresponding to the modern republics of Guatemala (which then included the Mexican state of Chiapas), Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Panama was ruled from the South American province of New Granada.

Weakened by Napoleonic wars and rent by internal dissensions, Spain found herself in the first two decades of the nineteenth century unable to maintain her waning power in America. Bolivar and his brother patriots raised the standard of revolt in South America in 1810 and in the same year war for independence broke out in the north. Hidalgo, the parish priest of Dolores, rang the liberty bell of Mexican freedom on the 16th of September, 1810. This beloved patriot was captured the year following, and shot, but the revolution once begun was continued under Morelos and other leaders. After 1815 the cause seemed hopeless, but in 1820 there was a new uprising and General Iturbide, who was sent to put it down, turned his army against the government and established himself as emperor. Central America was also included in this Mexican empire. The rule of Iturbide soon became unpopular and in 1823 he abdi-

cated his throne. The Mexican republic that was then instituted continued until the French intervention in 1861. During this time the most noteworthy events were the war with the United States in 1846-47 and the passing of the reform laws under Benito Jaurez that freed Mexico from the oppressions of the church.

As a result of the French intervention Maximilian of Austria was made emperor. This unfortunate ruler, who did much to beautify Mexico City, was dethroned and shot in 1867. The republic was then re-established.

The other republics of Central America formed a federal union at the time the first Mexican empire came to an end in 1823. This union was preserved till 1839 and several later attempts were made to restore it. The five republics have had such tempestuous careers as a result of warfare, usurpation, and political brigandage that their material and social development has been stunted. Costa Rica is, however, on the high road to stability.

Panama was until 1903 a part of Colombia. British Honduras had its origin in the concessions given to English logwood gatherers and to the fact that pirates found refuge behind the coral reefs that line the shores. The English claim to the Mosquito Coast rested upon a similar flimsy basis, and was finally abandoned.

**Languages.** About thirty distinct groups of related languages, technically known as linguistic stocks, were found in Mexico and Central America. Some of these stocks occupied small areas and showed little in the way of word variation. A few stocks were stretched over wide territories and were divided into many mutually unintelligible tongues, which in turn were subdivided into well-defined dialects. Several entire stocks are now extinct and others are rapidly approaching extinction through the substitution of Spanish. A



number of languages, however, are still spoken by hundreds of thousands of natives.

The linguistic stock having the greatest geographical extension within the area under consideration is the Nahuatl, with which has recently been consolidated the great Shoshonean group of languages. This stock may be compared to the Indo-Iranian stock of the Old World, which comprises most of the modern and ancient languages of Europe as well as those of a large part of Asia. Within the United States are the numerous Shoshonean tribes extending as far north as Idaho. In southern Arizona and northwestern Mexico is the Piman group of languages that also belongs to the Nahuatl stock. East of the Sierra Madre are the Tarahumara and the Tepehuana. These languages are mutually unintelligible and all are subdivided into dialects. The general relationship is proved only through laborious comparison and analysis of the words and grammar, in the same way as the philologist proves that Persian, Greek, Russian, English, and Welsh are all related tongues. Farther to the south are still other divisions of the Nahuatl stock, including the Huichol and Cora of the mountainous region north of Guadalajara and the Mexican or Aztec of the valley of Mexico and adjacent country. The Mexican language is still spoken by a million or more natives and is divided into a number of dialects. Properly the Aztecs are a single tribe whose chief city was Tenochtitlan, the ancient Mexico City. Mexican colonies were widespread before the coming of the Spaniards and during the Conquest the distribution of this nation was made still greater. The Mexicans, and especially the natives of Tlascala, accompanied the Spaniards on military expeditions against other tribes and as a consequence many place names in southern Mexico and Guatemala were



translated into the Mexican language. There were, however, large groups of Indians of the Nahuan stock already located in this territory. The Pipiles were given their name, which means "boys," because their speech was somewhat different from classical Mexican. They were situated in southern Guatemala and in Salvador. Still farther south were the Niquirao of Nicaragua and a little-known group called the Sigua in Costa Rica.

The wide geographical distribution of Nahuan languages has an undeniable historical significance. The numerous tribes represent a very wide range in culture albeit nearly all are dwellers of arid or semi-arid regions. Some like the Paiute are miserable "diggers" willing to eat anything that will support life; others like the Comanche are warlike raiders; more progressive tribes like the Hopi have adopted agriculture and developed interesting arts and customs; while the highest members of the group are among the most civilized nations of the New World. It seems clear that language as a basis of classification extends over a much greater stretch of time than does culture. Particular phases of art, religion, and government develop and disappear, but the grouping of sounds used to express ideas remains as proof that peoples now far apart geographically as well as in their habits and achievements were once close together. The peculiar grouping, in this instance, may indicate a general southward movement.

The second most important group of languages is the Mayan, now spoken by over half a million people. This stock has only one outlying member, namely, the Huasteca of northern Vera Cruz. The other twenty-one languages cover a continuous area in the Mexican states of Yucatan, Tabasco, and Chiapas and in the republic of Guatemala. The most important language

of the group is the Maya proper, which is spoken by the natives of Yucatan and by the Lacandone Indians of the Usumacinta Valley. The Quiché, Cakchiquel, Chol, and Chorti are other prominent languages.

In the region of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec are the Zapotecan and Zoquean stocks, which differ widely in sound and structure from the Mayan and Nahuatl tongues that hem them in. West, north, and east of the Valley of Mexico are, respectively, the Tarascan, Otomian, and Totonacan stocks, which show no great amount of subdivision. In Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica are several language groups that have never been carefully studied. It seems likely that some of these will be consolidated when words and grammatical structures are better known. The Chiapanecan languages, now practically extinct, were spoken in three localities on the Pacific side of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, while a fourth division occupied a small area far to the northwest on the banks of the Chiapas River. Parts of the Isthmian region were held by tribes having linguistic affiliation with South America. It is not unlikely that a considerable back flow from South America made itself felt along the Atlantic coast of Central America, if we may judge by ethnological features and by suggested language connections.

**Ethnology.** To a less extent than the native languages the old-time customs still hold out against the tide of European influence. In regions not easily accessible on account of deserts, mountains, or tropical jungles, there are a number of groups of Indians that preserve in a large measure their ancient arts and ideas. Unfortunately the study of these remnants has not been very thorough.

The Pima, Seri, Tarahumare, Tepehuane, and other

tribes of the extreme north and northwest of Mexico have until recent times been comparatively unmodified by Spanish influences. Basketry, textiles, and pottery



Fig. 8. Design on Modern Huichol Ribbon.



Fig. 9. Woven Pouch of the Huichol Indians showing Two-Headed Austrian Eagle.

have been maintained by them as well as many religious ceremonies. Farther south among the Cora and Huichol there is also considerable purity in this regard. The woven fabrics of these Indians are very beautiful



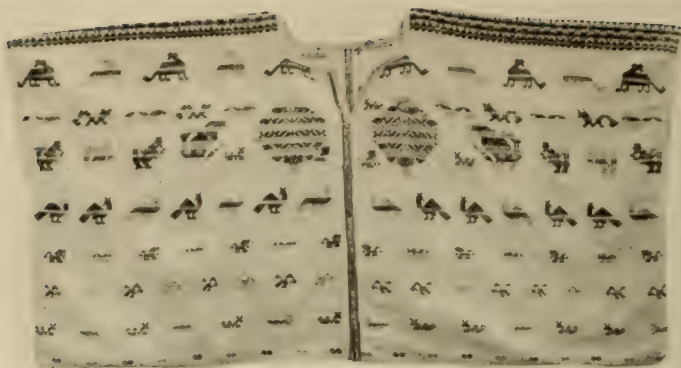
but introduced ideas are frequently seen. For instance, a very common motive in Huichol textile art is the two-headed Austrian eagle evidently taken from the coins of Charles V. Crowns similar to those worn by the two-headed eagle are often shown on the heads of rampant animals. But the greater number of the motives are doubtless of native origin.

Among the Huichol and Tarahumare the curious *peyote*, or *hikule* worship may be studied. A small variety of cactus is eaten, which induces ecstasy or stupor accompanied by color visions and peculiar dreams. Associated with the eating and gathering of this plant there are elaborate ceremonies. The religious cult of the peyote has swept over a large portion of the Great Plains Area of the United States and is known even to Indians in the neighborhood of the Great Lakes. There can be no doubt that the narcotic action of the peyote was known to the Aztecs, who made a ceremonial use of it under the name *teonanacatl*. An intoxicating drink called *teswin* is commonly made in northern Mexico from the heart of the mescal plant. It takes the place of the famous *pulque*, the ancient beverage of the Mexican highlands. Hunting dances in which are employed regalia and ceremonial objects of great interest occur among the Huichol and neighboring tribes. The so-called "god's eyes" made of yarn strung spider-web fashion over crossed sticks are practically identical with the "squash blossoms" of the Pueblo Indians. There are also real temple structures, or "god houses," which are very significant when we consider the former importance of the temple among the more highly civilized peoples to the south. In these and other respects the Huichol culture is about midway between the culture of the Southwestern Pueblo tribes and that which formerly existed in central Mexico.



Elsewhere in northern and central Mexico it is possible to find many suggestions of ancient Indian ways of living. In nearly all the outlying villages the old-time thatched huts are still used, while baskets, gourd vessels, wooden bowls, earthen pots, and other household objects hark back to native origins although often modified by European contact. For instance, glazing is commonly seen on the modern pottery. Many travelers in Mexico bring away as souvenirs pieces of pottery from Guadalajara and Cuernavaca. These wares are made by Indians, but in decoration they have only slight traces of the ancient art of the Mexicans.

In dress there are noteworthy survivals. The poncho and serape made either on the narrow hand loom or on a crude form of the Spanish tread loom are picturesque elements in the national dress that are rapidly disappearing from view. Time was when the rich plantation owner wore a gayly colored blanket on *fiesta* days. The most famous centers for the manufacture and sale of blankets were the cities of Saltillo and San Miguel. The Saltillo pattern shows a medallion consisting of concentric diamonds in various colors upon an all-over design in stripes. The motives are minute geometric figures skilfully interlocked. The colors are rich and permanent and are combined in a very pleasing manner. Saltillo blankets must be classed among the finest textile products of the world. The best period was before 1850. San Miguel blankets show characteristically a rosette instead of a diamond in the center. Many beautiful blankets come from other localities in Mexico. The Chimayo blankets have the same part Indian, part Spanish origin and are made by the Spanish-speaking natives in the mountain valleys of New Mexico.



[a]



[b]

Plate IV. (a) A Guatemala *huipil* decorated with Highly Conventionalized Animals in Embroidery; (b) Pouches of the Valiente Indians of the Chiriqui Lagoon, Panama.

In southern Mexico there are many towns of Indians where the women still wear the finely embroidered *huipili*. This old-time garment varies considerably in different towns but as a rule it is a simple sack-like gown cut square at the neck and with short sleeves. Sometimes it is shortened to a blouse, and is worn with a skirt; at other times a short *huipili* is worn over a longer one. An easily visited town where the natives still wear the old-time dress is Amatlan, within an hour's walk of Cordova. The women of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec have a gorgeous costume of which the most remarkable feature is a wide ruff worn around the neck or on the back of the head. The Mayan women of Yucatan wear white *huipili* with needlework in color around the bottom. On the highlands of Guatemala the *huipili* is usually a blouse. The skirt sometimes consists of a strip of cloth wrapped several times around the body.

The Lacandone Indians live in the marshy jungles that border the winding Usumacinta. They speak the same tongue as the Maya Indians of Yucatan but in the matter of culture they have acquired little from the Spaniards. They still weave simple garments and make pottery vessels. In hunting they use the bow and arrow, the latter usually tipped with a point of stone. In their religious practices they use incense burners which are comparable to those of the sixteenth century.

The Caribs occupy the greater part of the north coast of Guatemala and Honduras, running east from the port of Livingston on the Gulf of Amatique. These people, originally of South America and later of the West Indies as well, were deported by the English from the Island of St. Vincent in 1796. They have now established themselves in the new land where they raise the manioc or cassava root and press out the poisonous juice in a



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[b]

Plate V. (a) Zapotecan Girl from the State of Oaxaca, wearing a Turban-Like Headdress made of Yarn; (b) Lacandonc Woman from Southern Mexico. Wavy hair is sometimes seen among the few members of this Mayan tribe.



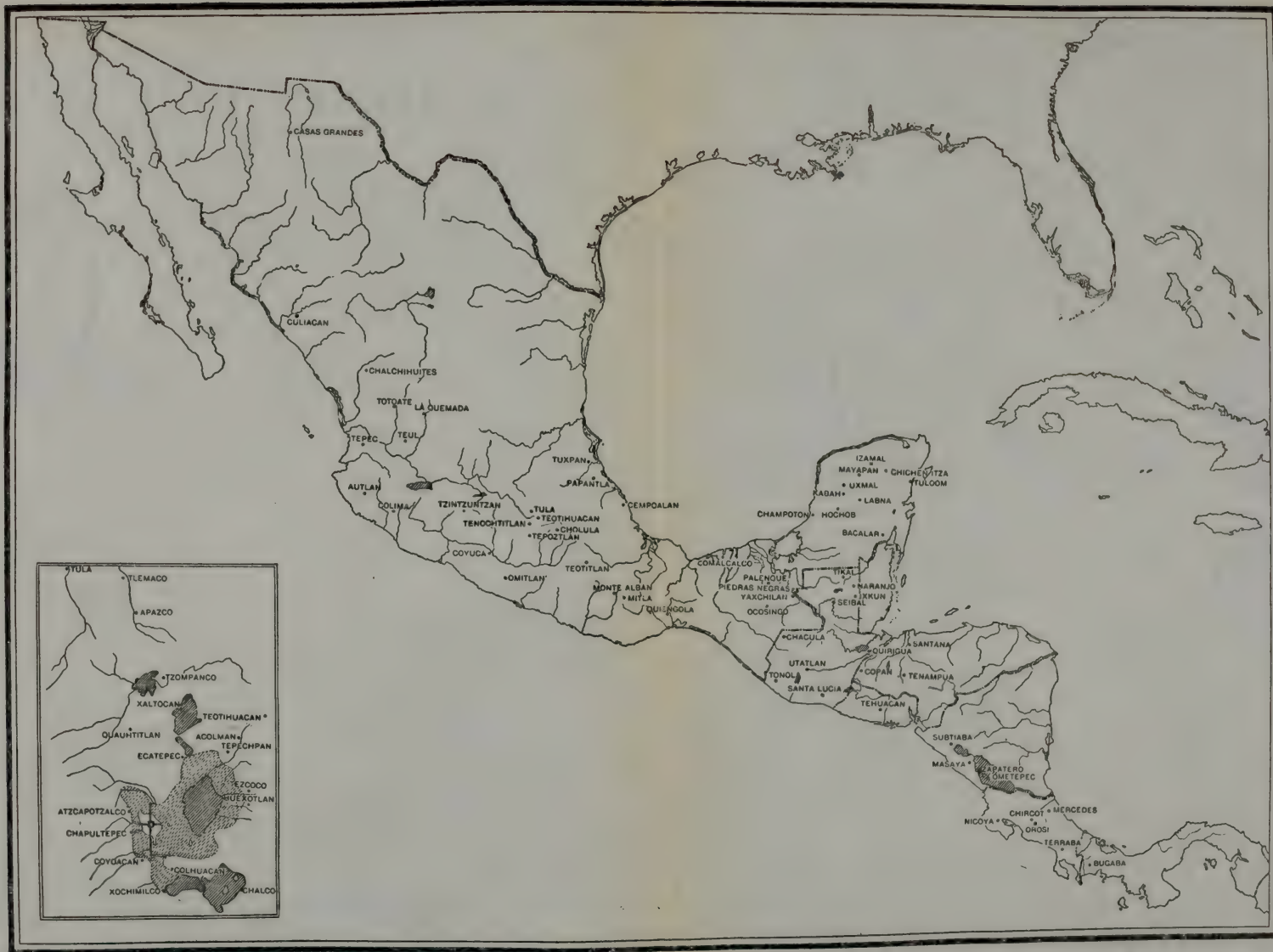
basketry tube as do their kindred in the Orinoco Valley. Long before the forcible immigration it is likely that the Caribs, who were cannibalistic in habit, had raided the shores of Central America in their seagoing canoes. A significant passage in the chronicles of the Mayas states that naked man-eating savages visited Yucatan long before the coming of the Spaniards.

The Mosquito Indians of the east coast of Nicaragua have a very considerable negro admixture. They are fishermen of low culture. It has recently been possible to connect the original Indian stock of this unhealthy coast with other tribes who live farther inland. The interior tribes of eastern Honduras and Nicaragua retain a great deal of their old-time culture but they have been seldom visited or described. Large communal houses are constructed in some parts of this region. The bow and arrow is still skilfully used in killing game. The authority of the government does not make itself felt among these wild and primitive Indians although many acknowledge outwardly the Catholic faith.

In the narrow Isthmian region there are tribes of Indians that resist manfully the inroads of civilization. Perhaps the best known of these are the San Blas Indians who inhabit the mountain fastnesses east of the Canal Zone. In northern Costa Rica the Guatuso and Talamancas tribes still maintain to a considerable degree their old native character.

**Physical Types.** Minor physical differences in stature, head form, and facial expression mark off pretty clearly the tribes of this area from each other. The stature is lowest among the Mayas and Mazatecas, the average being about 5 feet 1 inch while among the Tarascans, Tlascalas, and Zapotecs, it averages about 5 feet 3 inches. The other tribes of Central America

and of central Mexico fall between these extremes. In northern Mexico the stature increases considerably, average measurements for the Yaqui being in excess of 5 feet 6 inches. To make up for their lack of height the southern Indians are sturdy and heavy muscled, with deep chests. Their hair is usually black and straight, but occasionally wavy. Light beards and mustaches are sometimes worn, especially by the Mayas. The eyes are so dark brown as to appear black to the casual observer. They are set rather wide apart and while usually horizontal they seem, in some instances, to have a slight Mongoloid tilt. Noses vary greatly but are often finely aquiline. The cephalic index (obtained by dividing the breadth of the head by its length and multiplying the result by 100) is rather high. The Mayas are strongly round-headed with an index of 85.0 while their linguistic relatives, the Tzendals, have a medium index of 76.8. The other tribes of southern Mexico fall between these extremes. No long-headed peoples are found in this area although in northern Mexico some tribes approach the long-headed type.



Map of Mexico and Central America showing the Principal Archaeological Sites with a Detail Insert of the Valley of Mexico.





## CHAPTER I

### THE ARCHAIC HORIZON

**I**N 1910 an actual stratification of human products was found in the environs of Mexico City in which three principal culture horizons could readily be discerned. A collection made at this time is on exhibition in the American Museum of Natural History. In part this stratification verified theories of culture succession already held by students working in this field. Since that time careful research in several localities has been carried on under the International School of Archaeology and many authenticated specimens from the three layers have been brought together. The lowest layer, characterized by crude figurines of a peculiar style, was soon found to correspond to an art long known as Tarascan. This art had been referred to the Tarascan Indians of the state of Michoacan, notwithstanding the fact that the most noteworthy specimens came from outside the Tarascan area.

It now seems likely that the archaic art was the common product of all the tribes then living on the Mexican highlands but that the Nahuan tribes led in its development and dissemination. It is most common in regions inhabited by the Nahuan tribes and seems to have been carried southward by certain of these tribes who migrated to Guatemala, Salvador, and Nicaragua. In these southern Nahuan areas the archaic art, at least so far as the human figurines are concerned, is often indistinguishable from that of the north. Beyond Nicaragua it is possible to follow the stream of this ancient art well into South America, but these southernmost occurrences are accompanied by changes in form and technique.

**Stratification of Remains.** Atzacapotzalco was once an important center of the Tepanecan tribe situated on the shores of Lake Tezcoco. It was an early



Fig. 10. Atzacapotzalco Destroyed. The temple burns at the Place of the Ant.

rival of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital, and was conquered and partly destroyed in 1439. The principal modern industry of Atzacapotzalco is the making of bricks, and several mounds and much of the surface of the plain have been removed for this purpose. In the mounds are found many pottery objects of the Toltec period, while on the surface of the ground are encountered fragments of the typical Aztec pottery in use when the Spaniards arrived.

The stratification of the plain varies in different places so far as the thickness of the different strata is concerned, but the order is always the same. At one locality it is as shown in Fig. 11. First comes a layer of fine soil of volcanic ash origin, probably deposited by the wind. This is five or six feet in thickness, yellowish at the top, and much darker towards the bottom, with streaks and discolorations. The Aztec pottery is found close to the surface, while Toltec pottery occurs in the middle and lower sections. Underneath the soil layer lies a thick stratum of water-bearing gravel mixed with sand. This gravel stratum is possibly the old bed of a stream that formerly entered Lake Tezcoco near this point. In some places it is fifteen or eighteen feet in thickness. Scattered throughout the gravel are heavy, waterworn fragments of pots as well as more or less complete figurines of the archaic type.

At other sites, such as Colhuacan, the Toltec layer

is of greater thickness and the archaic layer of lesser thickness. The remains extend below the present level of the water and may indicate that considerable changes have taken place in the level of the lake. But we must remember that many of the ancient settlements were

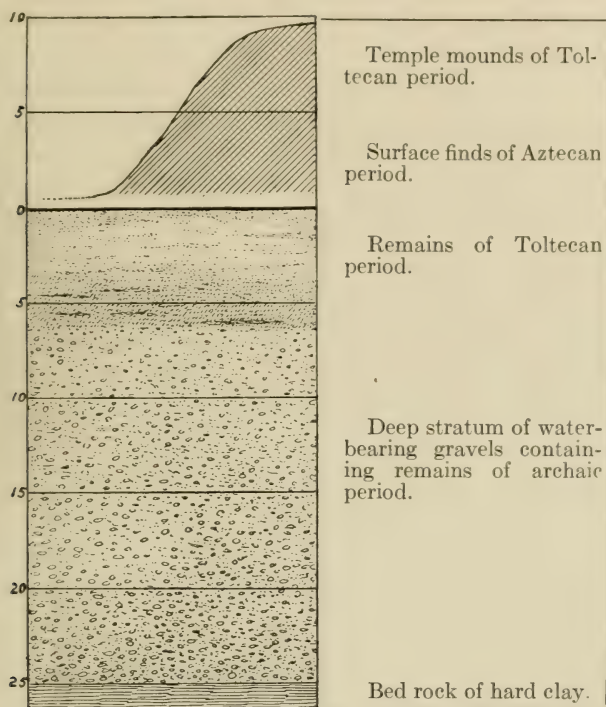


Fig. 11. Diagram of Culture Strata at Atzacapotzalco.

built over the water and that land was made in ancient times, as it is today in the gardens of Xochimilco, by deepening canals. Archaic remains are also common on the denuded tops of hills which may once have been covered by soil.

**Invention of Agriculture.** Before examining in greater detail the art of the Archaic Horizon let us stop and consider its real significance. It is generally admitted that America was originally populated from Asia, but on a culture level no higher than the Neolithic.



Fig. 12. *Teocentli* or Mexican Fodder Grass.

The simple arts of stone chipping, basketry, fire-making, etc., were probably brought over by the earliest immigrants but there is abundant evidence that pottery-making, weaving, and agriculture were independently invented long after the original settlement. The cultivated plants in the New World are different from those of the Old World and there is a vast area in northwestern America and northeastern Asia, upon the only open line of

communication, where agriculture and the higher arts have never been practised.

Now the invention of agriculture is an antecedent necessity for all the high cultures of the New World. It is equally clear that this invention must have taken place in a locality where some important food plant grew in a wild state. By far the most important food plant of the New World is maize. While this plant has changed greatly under domestication, botanists are inclined to find its nearest relative and possible progenitor in a wild grass growing on the highlands of Mexico and known by the Aztecan name *teocentli*, which means



sacred maize. It is known that maize is at its best in a semi-arid tropical environment. It cannot be brought to withstand frost although the growing season can be cut down to meet the requirements of a short summer. Geographically its use extended from the St. Lawrence to the Rio de la Plata and from sea level to an elevation of fifteen thousand feet in tropical regions. The Mexican highlands occupy the central position in the area of its distribution and archaeological evidence strongly points to this region as being the cradle of agriculture and the attendant arts. Besides maize, the most widely distributed food plants of the New World are beans and squashes. Certain other plants were cultivated in more restricted areas and may have had different places of origin. For instance, manioc was doubtless brought under cultivation in a humid lowland region, probably the Amazon Valley, and the same may be said of sweet potatoes. The common potato was found under domestication in Peru and there is no very good evidence that its use extended into Central America.

Irrigation would have been necessary before agriculture could have been developed to any great extent on the highlands of Mexico. Although irrigation is often looked upon as a remarkable sequel of the introduction of agriculture into an arid country, yet from the best historical evidence at our command we should rather regard it as a conception which accounts for the very origin of agriculture itself. The earliest records of cultivated plants are from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Mexico, and Peru where irrigation was practised and where in these regions are also seen the earliest developments of the characteristic arts of sedentary peoples, namely, pottery and weaving and the elaborate social and religious structures that result from a sure food supply and a reasonable amount of leisure.



[a]



[b]

Plate VI. (a) Large Archaic Figures found in Graves and offering Evidence of Ancient Customs and Arts. From Tepic and Jalisco; (b) Archaic Figures which show a Quality of Caricature or possibly Portraiture.

If this theory is true we must admit that below the Archaic Horizon we should find traces of a horizon of non-agricultural peoples. Unfortunately, such peoples make fewer objects and scatter them more widely than do sedentary agriculturists.

No one on the basis of present knowledge can offer more than an opinion concerning the date of the invention of agriculture in the New World and the subsequent beginning of the pottery art that will now claim our attention. The thick deposits argue great age and a thousand years or even more might have elapsed before this archaic art ran its natural course and was succeeded by higher arts at about the time of Christ.

**Archaic Figurines.** Archaic art is characterized by figures of men and women modeled in clay and sometimes painted. The forms are peculiar and the tech-

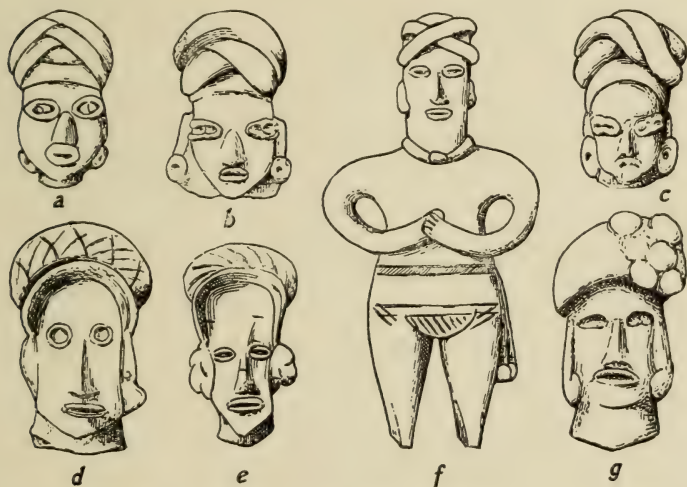


Fig. 13. Figurines from the Earliest Culture Horizon in Mexico: *a-c*, Atzacapotzalco; *d*, San Juan Teotihuacan; *e*, Tuxpan; *f*, Zapotlan; *g*, Cuernavaca.

nique well standardized. Most are modeled in a flat gingerbread fashion into a gross shape. Upon this gross shape special features are indicated by stuck-on ribbons and buttons of clay and by gougings and incisions with some pointed instrument. Modeling was done entirely by hand, moulds being as yet unknown. The figurines are usually from two to five inches in height and often represent nude women in sitting or standing positions with the hands upon the knees, hips, or breasts. The heads are characteristically of slight

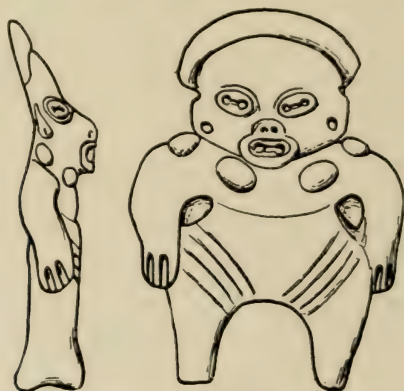


Fig. 14. Archaic Figurine from Salvador.

depth compared with their height, the limbs taper rapidly from a rather plump torso and hands and feet are mere knobs with incised details. When the figures are intended to stand erect, as is often the case, the feet show signs of having been pinched between the thumb and finger of the potter so that they have a forward and backward cusp and a broad base of support. Groovings are seen in connection with the hair, eyes, mouth, fingers, toes, and details of dress and ornament. Paint is often added to this surface to indicate tattooing, textile patterns, etc.



The eyes of the archaic images—and the mouths as well—are made according to several methods. First, there is the simple groove; second, a groove across an applied ball or button of clay; third, a round gouging made by the end of a blunt implement held vertically; fourth, a round gouging in an applied ball or button of clay; fifth, two gougings made with a round or chisel-edged implement held at an angle. The second form of eye, which resembles a grain of coffee, and the fifth form with the double gouging made from the center out-

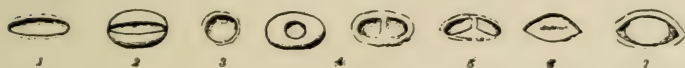


Fig. 15. Types of Eyes of Archaic Figurines.

ward, are found from the northern limits of archaic art in Mexico as far south as Colombia and Venezuela.

The technique of manufacture naturally changes somewhat with the increase in size. There is also reason to believe that the largest hollow figures come from the end of the Archaic Period in Mexico, and especially those that have been found in the state of Jalisco and the territory of Tepic. The eyelids are often rather carefully modeled and sometimes an eyeball is put in between the lids. These and perforated eyes seem to be the latest characters to be developed in the archaic art and it is significant that they are not found over such a wide area as the forms of eyes given above.

**Ancient Customs.** We may gather much of an ethnological nature from the study of these quaint figures. Articles of dress and adornment are shown as well as musical instruments, weapons, etc. Head-dresses may consist of fillets, turbans, and objects perched on one side of the head. Noserings and ear-

rings are abundantly represented and in considerable variety. We may be sure that weaving was rather highly developed because many garments such as shirts, skirts, and aprons are painted or incised with geometric designs. Body painting, or tattooing, appears to have been a common usage. Among weapons the *ailatl*, or spear-thrower, was already known and knobby clubs seem to have been popular. Men are shown beating on drums and turtle shells, while women nurse children and carry water. Since the large figures of clay are often found in tombs it is not impossible that

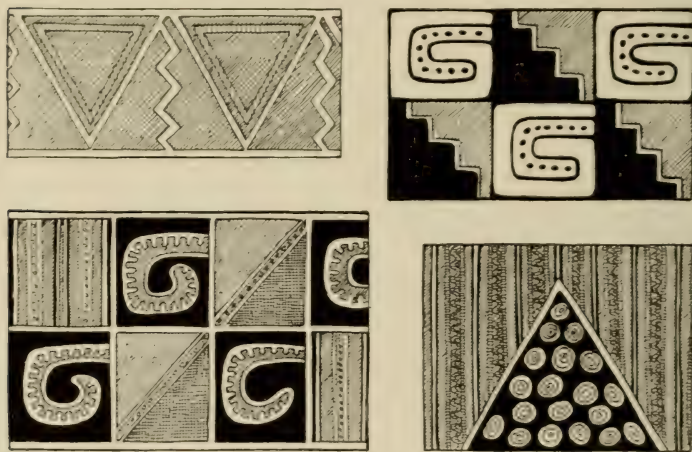


Fig. 16. Textile Designs painted on Archaic Effigies.

they were intended to be portraits of the dead. Many have a startling quality of caricature.

Archaic art is a pretty certain index of the religion then in vogue. There is a notable absence of purposely grotesque or compounded figures representing divinities such as will be found in the later horizons. Dogs are rather frequently modeled in clay and were apparently

developed into a rather special domestic breed. Snakes are sometimes shown. We miss entirely the characteristic Mexican gods such as Tlaloc and Ehecatl. We can find no evidence that human sacrifice was practised. The presence of human figurines in graves has already been mentioned. The nude female figurine in a sitting or standing position has an unbroken distribution from Mexico into South America and it is not unlikely the primitive agriculturists associated it with fertility and used it as an amulet to secure good crops.

**Archaic Pottery.** The ordinary pottery of the Archaic Period from Mexico and Central America is



Fig. 17. Typical Tripod Vessels of the Archaic Period, from Morelos, Mexico.

heavy and simple in shape. The globular bowl with a constricted neck is a common form as well as wide-mouthed bowls with or without tripod supports. Lugs and handles are very common. When plain, the tripods are large, hollow and rounded, with a perforation on the under side, but they are often modified into faces and feet. Many vessels are decorated by the addition of faces enabling us to make a direct connection with the figures in clay already described.

In fact the decoration of pottery of this early period is predominantly in relief. Paint is sparingly used and then only in the simplest geometric fashion. There is a general lack of conventionalized motives presenting animals and other natural forms in highly modified ways. In later ages the painted decoration is much

concerned with the serpent, but except for a few winding serpents in relief, this motive is not seen on the pottery of the Archaic Period.

**Stone Sculptures of the Archaic Period.** The earliest stone sculptures are recognized first by resemblance to the ceramic art just described and second by a quality which they possess of being archaic in an absolute sense. The greater difficulty of working stone as compared with clay and the longer time required in the process makes stone art less subject to caprice than ceramic art. Perhaps the most primitive examples of stone sculpture are boulders rudely carved in a semblance of the human form with features either sunken or in relief. The arms and legs are ordinarily flexed so that the elbows meet over the knees. The eyes and mouths in the most carefully finished pieces protrude, but the face has little or no modeling. Many celts are

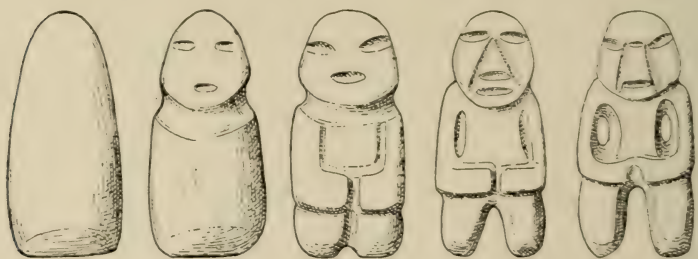


Fig. 18. Series showing the Modification of a Celt into a Stone Amulet.

modified into figures by grooves, and faces are frequently represented on roughly conical or disk-shaped stones.

We know very little from actual excavations concerning houses of the Archaic Period. It is likely that they were small and impermanent, possibly resembling the modern huts. The pyramidal mound as a foundation





[a]



[b]

Plate VII. (a) Stone Sculptures of the Archaic Period. This resembles the pottery as regards style: the eyes protrude and the limbs are carved in low relief against the body; (b) Typical Site of the Archaic Period. The use of pyramids may have begun towards the end of this period.

for the temple was possibly developed towards the end of the Archaic Period. It would be interesting to determine whether adobe moulded into bricks was known at this time, as it was at a later time in the same region, or whether walls were built up out of fresh mud possibly reinforced by slabs of stone.

**Extensions of the Archaic Horizon.** The curious objects of ceramic art that we have found deeply buried under the débris of higher civilizations in the Valley of Mexico can be traced practically without change in form to Nicaragua. They are encountered for the most part in arid and open country, and since we have every reason to believe that the earliest agriculture was developed under irrigation, it is but natural to find the use of agriculture spreading first into other arid regions.

In the Isthmian region (Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama) many figurines of archaic type are found, and besides there are fine series of figurines that are obviously developed from the archaic. Still further south and east in Colombia and Venezuela the typical art of the archaic horizon again appears in almost pure form, although local developments are also to be noted. Everywhere the remains are most plentiful in arid regions. It now seems that the trail of this ancient pottery art, marking the first dissemination of agriculture, can be traced across the northern part of South America to the mouth of the Amazon and southward along the Andes to the coastal regions of Peru. It is surely significant that figurines from the Island of Marajo near Pará, Brazil, have fundamental similarities to those from Venezuela and Central America and that a stratification of human remains at Ancon, Peru, as explained by Dr. Max Uhle, shows plastic art in clay



[a]



[b]



[c]



[d]

Plate VIII. Widely Distributed Female Figurines: (a) Nicaragua; (b) Panama; (c) Venezuela; (d) Island of Marajo, Brazil.



Plate IX. Distribution of the Archaic Culture. The areas in solid black show the distribution of figurines of the archaic type; the areas in dots show the probable extension of pottery on the Archaic Horizon; the dotted lines give the ultimate extension of pottery.



similar if not identical with that of Central America in the lowermost level. The problem of local developments deserves careful study because if the theory that this pottery art spread hand in hand with agriculture be true then the greatest similarities should be seen in the oldest objects. Once the primary dissemination of agriculture and ceramics had taken place there would be few inventions capable of breaking down the ordinary boundaries of language and environment as these had done. In our own times the horse, introduced by the Spaniards, spread rapidly through native tribes, modifying their lives greatly. It is capable of demonstration that with the horse went the two types of saddle—the pack saddle and the riding saddle. Similarly, in the rapid first spreading of agriculture, pottery and possibly weaving appear as parts of a complex. Of course, we must grant a sufficient time in the original home of agriculture for these things to be developed.

Two maps of the New World are given herewith: the first showing the extension of the archaic horizon and the second the final distribution of pottery among the American Indians and the final distribution of agriculture. The agricultural area is subdivided according to, first, the arid land type where irrigation is generally practised; second, the humid land type; and third, the temperate land type. The first type of agriculture appears to be the earliest and the range coincides for the most part with the range of the archaic pottery art.

**Local Developments of Archaic Art.** We have now examined the status of this earliest pottery in Mexico and Central America and discussed the problem of its distribution into South America. Let us next turn our attention to some of the developments that took place when this art was locally permitted to work out



Plate X. Distribution of Agriculture in the New World. The dotted line gives the limits of pottery; solid black, agriculture in arid regions of considerable altitude, mostly with irrigation; dotted areas, agriculture under humid lowland conditions; lined area, agriculture under temperate conditions.

its higher destinies. The sudden rise of the superior culture of the Mayas snuffed it out untimely in southern Mexico, but in other and more distant regions the influence of the ascendant Mayan civilization was less strongly felt and was not sufficient to more than modify the original character of the archaic art. In other words, where the archaic art was given a few extra centuries to run it arrived at superior results.

It is probable that the unusually elaborate effigies from western Mexico are somewhat later in date than the comparatively simple figurines of central Mexico. But still better examples of local development out of the archaic are to be found in the Isthmian area. Here the most ancient remains (according to types, since actual stratigraphy has not yet been determined) appear to be common in the arid regions and rare in the humid regions. But in certain humid regions, such as the Peninsula of Nicoya on the Pacific side of Costa Rica and the Mercedes district on the Atlantic side, are found modified types of clay figurines and stone carvings that still retain many archaic features. Now, there is little doubt that in general these figurines and sculptures belong to an horizon above that of the truly archaic. The associated decorative art in painting is of a higher type than that of the Archaic Period in the north and shows in fact many points of contact with the painted designs on the vessels of the Mayan civilization.

Perhaps the most interesting type of figurine (found in both the localities named above, but more common in the west) represents a nude female in a sitting pose. The actual body treatment is very like that of the archaic seated females from Salvador and Mexico, but the surface is painted over with designs in glossy black upon dark and brilliant red. The paints as well as the

designs are peculiar and it is possible to group the figurines with vases in which the same pigments and decorations are used. Now, these associated vases are characteristically of the cylindrical shape that was in

great vogue among the Mayas in post-archaic times and the designs painted upon these vases also have many features in common with Mayan work.

Likewise when we pass to the Chiriqui region in western Panama we find the seated female to be common. Again, the associated designs are complicated and developed far beyond the point reached in the truly archaic of the northern stratigraphic series. The figurines belong to what has been called "alligator ware," because the alligator or crocodile is the subject of many of the designs. A safer classification is made on the basis of the clay and pigments. The archaic technique is also presented in much of the relief decoration of still

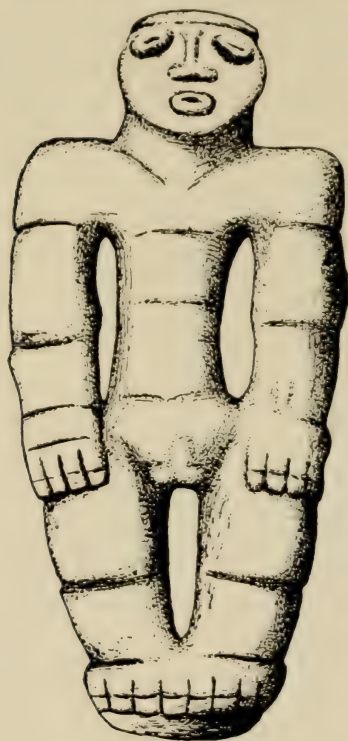


Fig. 19. Stone Sculpture with protruding Eyes and other Archaic Characters. Costa Rica.

other kinds of pottery from the Isthmian area. In the beautiful yellow ware of Chiriqui small human figures in the ancient style serve to decorate handles, knobs, and legs.



In stone art as well as in pottery there are local developments out of the archaic mode in Costa Rica and Panama. Crude figures with the parts carved in low relief around oval boulders seem to give away to more conventionalized sculptures made on slabs of sandstone. For this second type the limbs are partly freed from the torso, while in still later sculptures they are freed entirely.

The ancient gold work of Costa Rica and Panama also reflects the technique of archaic art although most of it, to judge by the religious significance of many of the subjects and designs, was made long after the Archaic Period. Just as the pottery figurines were built up by the addition of ribbons and buttons of clay to a generalized form so the patterns for gold castings were made by adding details in rolled wax or resin to a simple underlying form of the same material. This art will be discussed more fully in another place, the mention here being made simply to emphasize the general connection between the art of the Archaic Period and that of later periods.

**Summary.** In concluding this section let us sum up the general facts of ancient American history as these appear in relation to the archaeological evidences of the archaic horizon.

I. Pre-Archaic Horizon.

The peopling of the New World from Asia by tribes on the nomadic plane of culture.

II. The Archaic Horizon.

Invention and primary dissemination of agriculture, together with pottery making and loom weaving. Homogeneous culture with undeveloped religion and unsymbolic art. Practically limited to arid tropics.

### III. Post Archaic Horizon.

Specialized cultures in North, Central, and South America dependent upon agriculture. Strong local developments in esthetic arts, religious ideas, and social institutions. Agriculture extended to humid tropical and temperate regions.

We will now make an effort to analyze still further the historical levels in the Post Archaic Horizon.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MAYAN CIVILIZATION

THE wonderful culture of the Mayan Indians to which we will now turn our attention was developed in the humid lowlands of Central America and especially in the Yucatan peninsula. Artists are everywhere of the opinion that the sculptures and other products of the Mayas deserve to rank among the highest art products of the world, and astronomers are amazed at the progress made by this people in the measuring of time by the observed movements of the heavenly bodies. Moreover, they invented a remarkable system of hieroglyphic writing by which they were able to record facts and events and they built great cities of stone that attest a degree of wealth and splendor beyond anything seen elsewhere in the New World.

The Mayan culture was made possible by the agricultural conquest of the rich lowlands where the exuberance of nature can only be held in check by organized effort. On the highlands the preparation of the land is comparatively easy, owing to scanty natural vegetation and a control vested in irrigation. On the lowlands, however, great trees have to be felled and fast-growing bushes kept down by untiring energy. But when nature is truly tamed she returns recompense many fold to the daring farmer. Moreover, there is reason to believe that the removal of the forest cover over large areas affects favorably the conditions of life which under a canopy of leaves are hard indeed.

The principal crops of the Mayas were probably much the same as on the highlands, with maize as the great staple. Varieties favorable to a humid environment

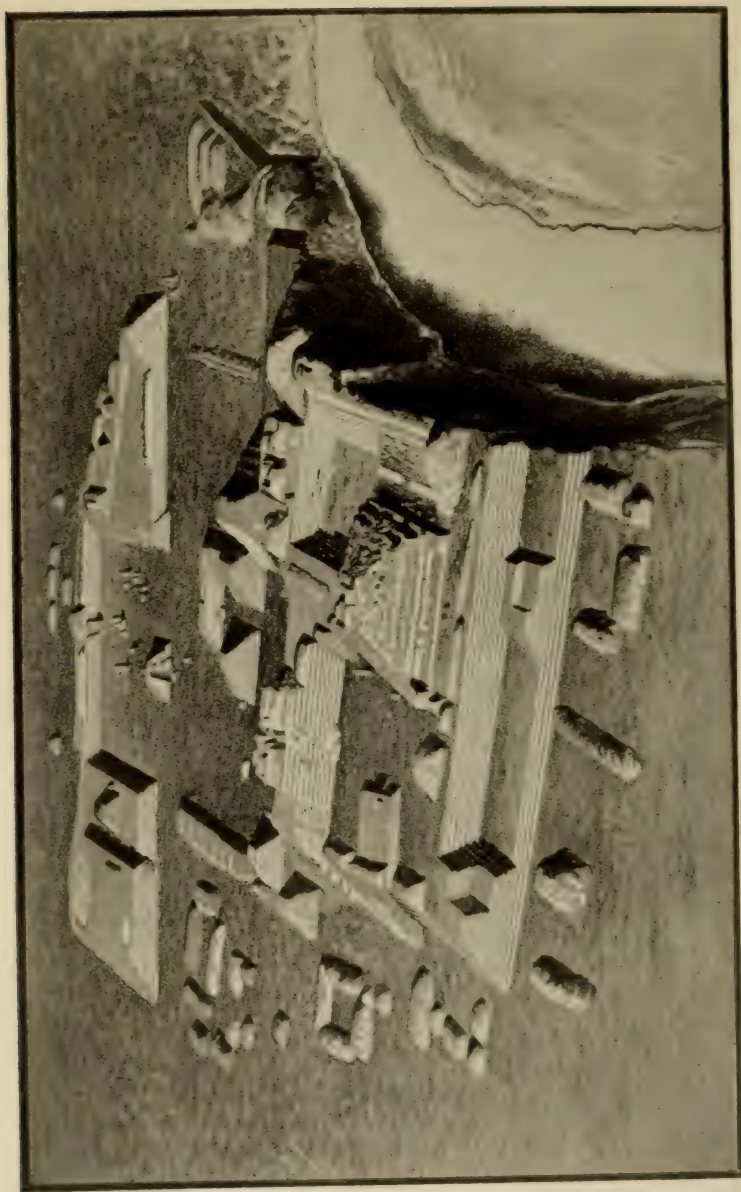


Plate XI. A General View of the Ceremonial Center of Copan. After a model and drawing by Maudslay. The artificial acropolis with temples on pyramids and sunken courts is in the foreground and beyond is seen the Great Plaza in which monuments are set up. The Copan River has cut into the side of the acropolis and made a natural cross-section.



had doubtless been developed from the highland stock by selective breeding as agriculture worked its way down into the lowlands. Archaic art appears along the edges of the Mayan area in the state of Vera Cruz, Mexico, and in the Uloa Valley, Honduras. In both these regions are also found clay figurines that mark the transition in style between the archaic and the Mayan as well as finished examples of the latter. There can be no doubt, then, that the archaic art of Mexico marks an earlier horizon than the Mayan. Whether or not it was once laid entirely across the Mayan area cannot be decided on present data but it seems unlikely. We have already seen that this first art was distributed primarily across arid and open territory.

With their calendrical system already in working order the Mayas appear on the threshold of history about the beginning of the Christian Era according to a correlation with European chronology that will be explained later. The first great cities were Tikal in northern Guatemala and Copan in western Honduras, both of which had a long and glorious existence. Many others sprang into prominence at a somewhat later date; for example, Palenque, Yaxchilan or Menché, Piedras Negras, Seibal, Naranjo, and Quirigua. The most brilliant period was from 300 to 600 A. D., after which all these cities appear to have been abandoned to the forest that soon closed over them. The population moved to northern Yucatan, where it no longer reacted strongly upon the other nations of Central America and where it enjoyed a second period of brilliancy several hundred years later.

**Architecture.** The idea of a civic center is admirably illustrated in Mayan cities, particularly those of the first brilliant period. The principal structures



[a]



[b]

Plate XII. (a) View of the Plaza at Copan from the North-western Corner. This view shows the monuments in position and the steps which may have served as seats; (b) View Across the Artificial Acropolis at Copan showing a Sunken Court and the Bases of Two Temple Structures. Photographs by Peabody Museum Expedition.

are built around courts or plazas and there is usually an artificial acropolis which is a great terraced mound serving as a common base or platform from which the individual pyramidal bases of several temples rise. At some sites this acropolis is a natural hill which has been trimmed down or added to, but at other sites it is entirely artificial. At Copan there is an especially fine example of artificial platform mound rising from one end of the Great Plaza and affording space for several temples as well as for sunken courts with stepped sides that may have been theatres. The river washing against one side of this great mound has removed perhaps a third of it and made a vertical section that shows the method of construction. It is apparent that the mound was enlarged and old walls and floors buried.

Mayan buildings are of two principal kinds. One is a temple pure and simple and the other has been called a palace. The temple is a rectangular structure crowning a rather high pyramid that rises in several steps or terraces. As a rule the temple has a single front with one or more doorways and is approached by a broad stairway. The pyramid is ordinarily a solid mass of rubble and earth faced with cement or cut stone and rarely contains compartments. Some temples have but a single chamber while others have two or more chambers, the central or innermost one being specially developed into a sanctuary. The so-called palaces are clusters of rooms on low and often irregular platforms. These palaces may have been habitations of the priests and nobility. The common people doubtless lived in palm-thatched huts similar to those used today in the some region.

The typical Mayan construction is a faced concrete. The limestone, which abounds in nearly all parts of the



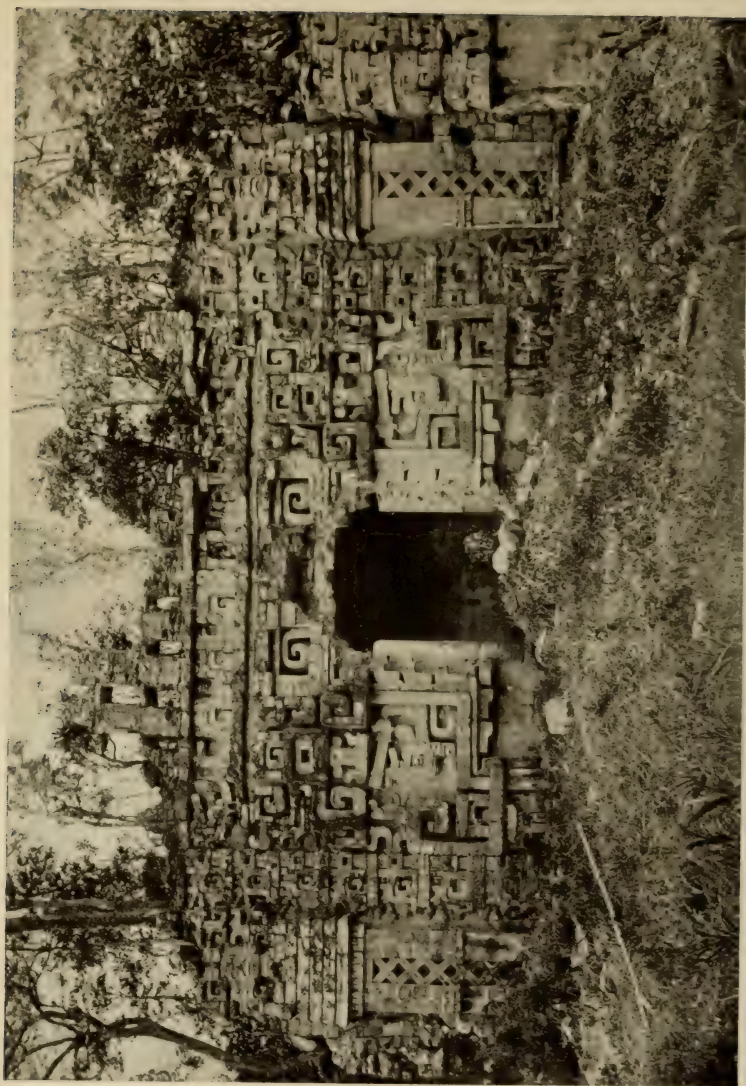


Plate XIII. A Temple at Hochob showing Elaborate Façade Decorations in Stucco. The design over the door represents a grotesque front view face of which the eyes can still be plainly made out. At either side of the door the design represents a serpent head in profile. Photograph by Maler.





Plate XIV. A Sealed Portal Vault in the House of the Governor at Uxmal. The veneer character of the cut stone comes out clearly. Peabody Museum photograph.

Mayan area, was burned into lime. This was then slaked to make mortar and applied to a mass of broken limestone. The facing stones were smoothed on the outside and left rough hewn and pointed on the inside. It is likely that these facing stones were held in place between forms and the lime, mortar and rubble filled in between. The resulting wall was essentially monolithic. The rooms of Mayan buildings are characteristically vaulted but the roof is not a true arch with a keystone. The vault, like the walls, is a solid mass of concrete that grips the cut stone veneer and that must

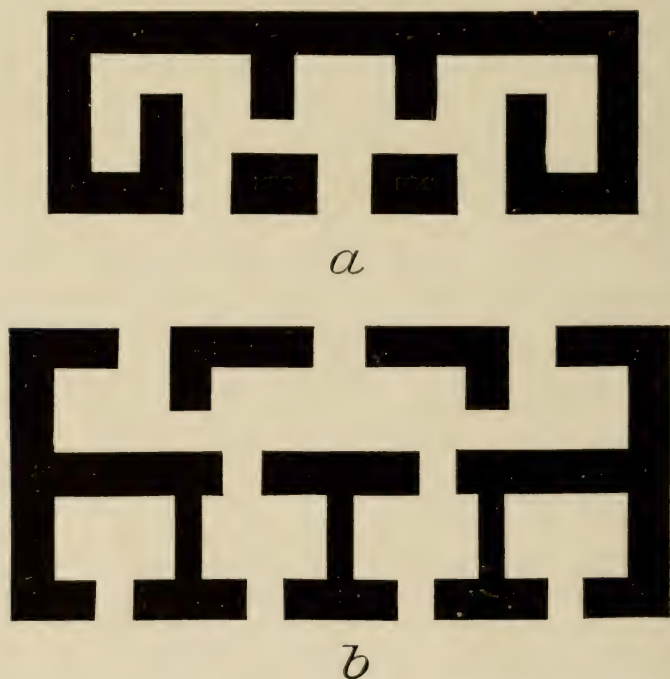


Fig. 20. Groundplans of Yaxchilan Temples: (a) Structure 42; (b) Structure 23.

have been held in place by a false work form while it was hardening. The so-called corbelled arch of overstepping stones was doubtless known to the Mayan builders but

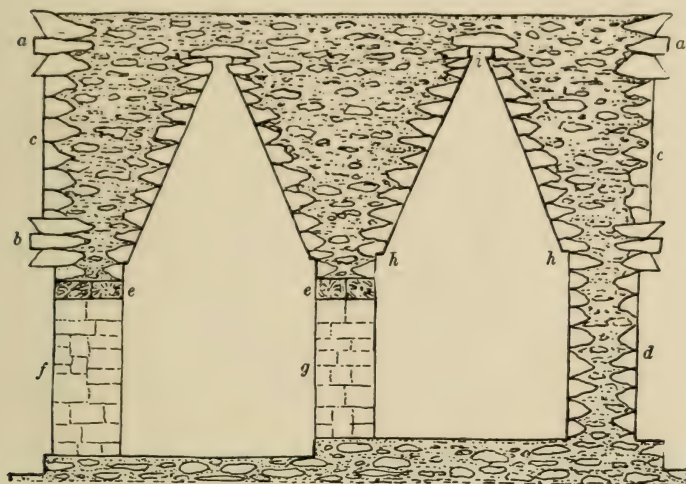


Fig. 21. Cross-section of Typical Mayan Temple in Northern Yucatan: *a*, upper cornice; *b*, medial cornice; *c*, upper zone; *d*, lower zone; *e*, wooden lintels; *f*, exterior doorway; *g*, interior doorway; *h*, offset at spring of vault; *i*, cap stone.

was little used. Taking the single rectangular room as the unit of construction the width was limited to the span of the vault, which seldom exceeded twelve feet, while the length was indeterminate.

The first variation from the temple with one rectangular room was the two-roomed structure with one chamber directly behind the other. In this case there were two vaulted compartments separated from each other by a common supporting wall pierced by one or more doorways. The inner room was naturally more dimly lighted than the outer one and as a result was modified into a sanctuary, or holy of holies, enhanced by sculp-

tures and paintings, while the outer room developed gradually into a portico. The outer wall was cut by doorways till only pier-like sections remained, and finally these piers were replaced by square or round columns. The development of the Mayan temple may be traced through a thousand years of change and adjustment.

Much attention was paid by Mayan builders to the question of stability which was accomplished directly by keeping the center of gravity of the principal masses within the supporting walls rather than by the use of binding stones. The cross-section of a two-roomed temple of late date will illustrate how this was done. There are three principal masses, one over the front wall, one over the medial partition, and one over the back wall. The roof where these sections join is of no great thickness. The central mass is symmetrical and, if the mortar has the proper cohesiveness, very stable. For the front and back masses the projection of the upper or frieze zone tends to counterbalance the overhang of half the vault. In the earlier temples the upper zone of the façade often slopes backward so that the balance is not so perfect.

So far we have given brief space to the question of elevations. Taken vertically there are three parts to the Mayan building: first, the substructure or pyramidal base; second, the structure proper; third, the superstructure. In the case of temples the structure proper is one story in height. Two and three stories are rather common in palaces, but the upper stories are in most cases built directly over a solid core and not over the rooms of the lower story. The upper stories, therefore, recede, so that the building presents a terraced or pyramidal profile. One building at Tikal is five stories in height, in three receding planes, the three



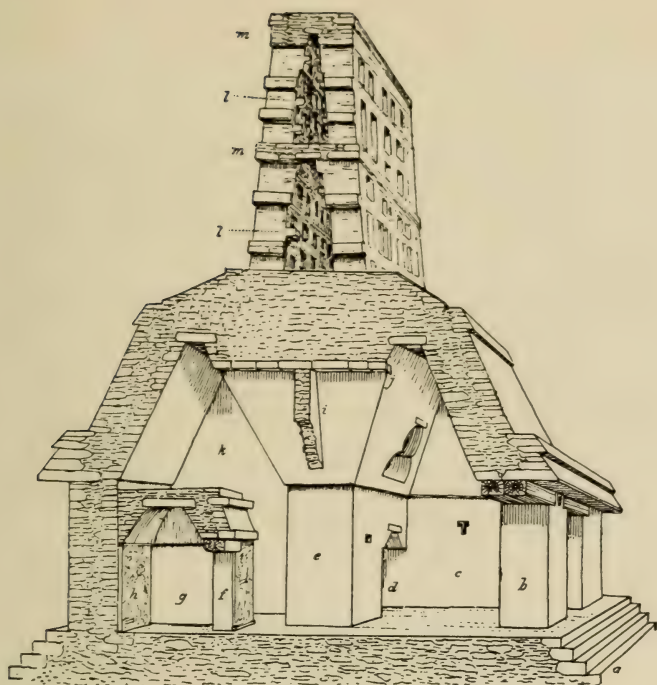


Fig. 22. Section through Middle of Temple of the Cross, showing Perspective of East Half of Building. After Holmes. *a*, stairway; *b*, a pier between doorways; *c*, end of portico or front room; *d*, small doorway; *e*, great doorway; *f*, doorway to sanctuary; *g*, end wall of sanctuary; *h*, sculptured tablet; *i*, arch brace of masonry; *j*, cap stones of doorway arch; *k*, partition wall; *l*, steps for ascending interior of roof comb; *m*, binding stones and capping of roof comb.

uppermost stories being one above the other. In a tower at Palenque we have an example of four stories but this is unusual.

On top of the building proper, especially if it is a temple, we frequently find a superstructure. This is a sort of crest, or roof wall, usually pierced by windows. When this wall rises from the center line of the roof it is called a roof comb or roof crest, and when it rises from the front wall it is called a flying façade. The highest temples in the Mayan area are those of Tikal that attain a total height of about 175 feet, counting pyramid and superstructure.

**Massive Sculptural Art.** The decoration of Mayan buildings may be considered under three heads: first, interior decoration; second, façade decoration; third, supplementary monuments. In many temples at Yaxchilan, Tikal, etc., are found splendidly sculptured lintels of stone or wood. At Copan we see wall sculptures that adorn the entrance to the sanctuary and at Palenque finely sculptured tablets let into the rear wall of the sanctuary. Elsewhere are occasional examples of mural paintings, sculptured door jambs, decorated interior steps, etc.

The façade decorations of the earlier Mayan structures are freer and more realistic than those of the later buildings. In many cases they consist of figures of men, serpents, etc., modeled in stucco or built up out of several nicely fitted blocks of stone. Grotesque faces also occur. In the later styles, decoration consists largely of "mask panels," which are grotesque front view faces arranged to fill rectangular panels, but there is an increasing amount of purely geometric ornament. The masked panels represent in most instances a highly elaborated serpent's face which sometimes carries the

special markings of one of the greater gods. These panels, considered historically, pass through some interesting developments. Angular representations of serpent heads in profile are sometimes used at the sides of doorways.

The supplementary monuments are stelæ and altars. These are monolithic sculptures that are often set up in definite relation to a building either on the terraces

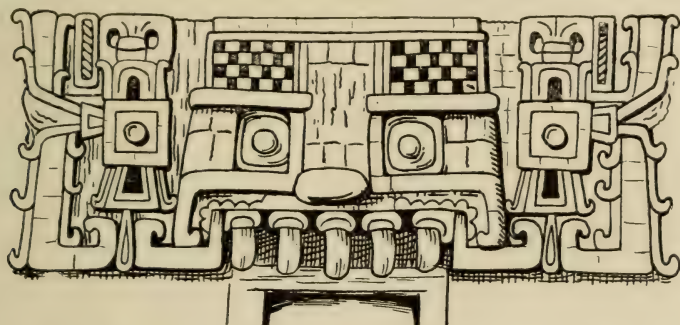


Fig. 23. Mask Panel over Doorway at Xkichmook. Yucatan.

or at the foot of the stairway. The stelæ are great plinths or slabs of stone carved on one or more sides with the figures of priests and warriors loaded down with religious symbols. The altars are smaller stones usually placed in front of the stelæ. Many stelæ and altars are set up in plazas and have no definite architectural quality.

**Minor Arts.** While the richly ornamented temples and the great monoliths attract first attention as works of art, the humbler products of the potter, the weaver, and the lapidary also attained to grace and dignity.

The Mayas were expert potters and employed a variety of technical processes in the decoration of their



[a]



[b]

Plate XV. (a) Realistic Designs on Vases from Chamá, Guatemala, representing the Best Mayan Period in Pottery; (b) The Quetzal as represented on a Painted Cylindrical Vase from Copan. Bands of Hieroglyphs are commonly found on Mayan Pottery.



wares, such as painting, modeling, engraving, and stamping. We can only take time to examine a few examples of the best works, leaving the commoner products practically undescribed. Suffice it to say, that tripod dishes were much used, as well as bowls, bottle-necked vessels, and cylindrical vases, and that the common decorative use of hieroglyphs serves to mark off Mayan pottery from that of other Central American peoples. The realistic designs are drawn in accordance with the highest principles of decorative art. Serpents, monkeys, jaguars, various birds, as well as priests and supernatural beings, are used as subjects for pottery embellishment. Geometric decoration is also much used.

The polychrome pottery is rare and exceptionally beautiful, with designs relating to religious subjects. The background color of these cylindrical vases is usually orange or yellow, the designs are outlined in black, and the details filled in with delicate washes of red, brown, white, etc. The surface bears a high polish made by rubbing. Plate XV reproduces the design units on two vases from Chamá, Guatemala. The first example pictures a seated man with a widespreading headdress made of two conventional serpent heads from the ends of which issue the plumes of the quetzal. The hieroglyphs are Mayan day signs—Ben and Imix on the left and Kan and Caban on the right. The second example presents a god before an altar. The god has the face of an old man and his body is attached to a spiral shell. This divinity has been called the Old Man God. He was probably associated with the end of the year.

In the next illustration an engraved design on a bowl from northern Yucatan is given. A jaguar attired in



Fig. 24. Design on Engraved Pot representing Tiger seated in Wreath of Water Lilies. Northern Yucatan.

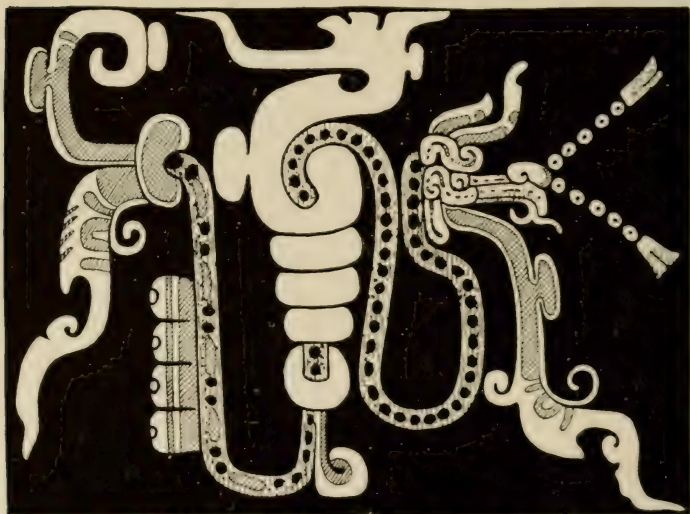


Fig. 25. Painted Design on Cylindrical Bowl showing Serpent issuing from a Shell. Salvador.

the dress of man is seated in a wreath of water lilies. After the vessel had been formed, but before it had been fired, this design was made by cutting away the background and incising finer details on the original surfaces. Other designs in relief were obtained by direct modeling or by stamping. The stamps were moulds or negatives made from bas-relief patterns.

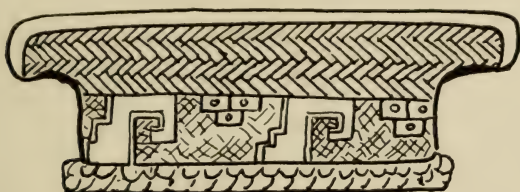


Fig. 26. Mayan Basket represented in Stone Sculpture.

The textile arts of the ancient Mayas can be recovered in part from a study of the monuments since the designs on many garments are reproduced in delicate relief. The designs are mostly all-over geometric patterns, but borders reproducing the typical "celestial band," a line of astronomical symbols, are also seen. The techniques of brocade and lace were understood by the ancient weavers. In the minor textile art of basketry the products must also have ranked high; a typical basket pictured on a lintel is given in Fig. 26.

Jade and other semi-precious stones were carved by the Mayas into beautiful and fantastic shapes. There was a considerable use of mosaic veneer on masks and other ceremonial objects. Metal was rare and could not be used for tools, but the working of gold and copper in the manufacture of ornaments was on a high plane.

Having now passed in brief review the objective side of Mayan remains, let us turn our attention to the subjective.

**The Serpent in Mayan Art.** Mayan art is strange and unintelligible at first sight, but after careful study many wonderful qualities appear in it. In the knowledge of foreshortening and composition, the

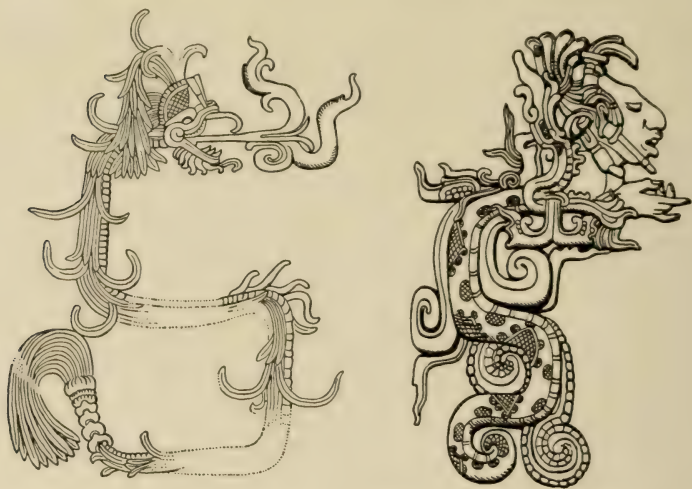


Fig. 27. Typical Elaborated Serpents of the Mayas. The plumed serpent is from Chichen Itza and the one with a human head in its mouth from Yaxchilan.

Mayas were equal if not superior to the Egyptians and Assyrians. They could draw the human body in pure profile and in free and graceful attitudes and they could compose several figures in a rectangular panel so that the result satisfies the eye of a modern artist.

But, unfortunately for our fuller understanding, the human form had only a minor interest because the gods





Fig. 28. Conventional Serpent of the Mayas used for Decorative Purposes: *a*, body; *b*, ventral scale; *c*, dorsal scale; *d*, nose; *e*, noseplug; *f*, incisor tooth; *g*, molar tooth; *h*, jaw; *i*, eye; *j*, supraorbital plate; *k*, earplug; *l*, ear pendant; *m*, curled fang; *n*, tongue; *o*, lower jaw; *p*, beard; *q*, incisor tooth.

were not in the image of man and the art was essentially religious. The gods were at best half human and half animal with grotesque elaborations. The high esthetic qualities were therefore wasted on subjects that appear trivial to many of us. But, as we break away more and more from the shackles of our own artistic conventions, we shall be able to appreciate more and more the many beauties of ancient American sculpture.

The serpent motive controlled the character of Mayan art and was of first importance in all subsequent arts in Central America and Mexico. The serpent was seldom represented realistically and yet we may safely infer that the rattlesnake was the prevailing model. Parts of other creatures were added to the serpent's body, such as the plumes of the trogon or quetzal, the teeth of the jaguar, and the ornaments of man. The serpent was idealized and the lines characteristic of it entered into the delineation of many subjects distinct from the serpent itself. Scrolls and other sinuous details were attached to the serpent's body and human ornaments such as earplugs, noseplugs, and even headdresses were added to its head. Finally, a human head was placed in the distended jaws. The Mayas may have intended to express the essential human intelligence of the serpent in this fashion. The serpent with a human head in its mouth doubtless belongs in the same category as the partly humanized gods of Egypt, Assyria, and India. It illustrates the partial assumption of human form by a beast divinity. The features combined are so peculiar and unnatural that the influence of Mayan art can be traced far and wide through Central America and Mexico by comparative study of the serpent motive.

A typical serpent head in profile (with the human head omitted) as developed by the Mayas for decora-

tive purposes is reproduced in Fig. 28 with the parts lettered and named. It will be noted that the lines of interest in this design are either vertical or horizontal, although the parts themselves have sinuous outlines. Two features of the typical serpent's body enter widely

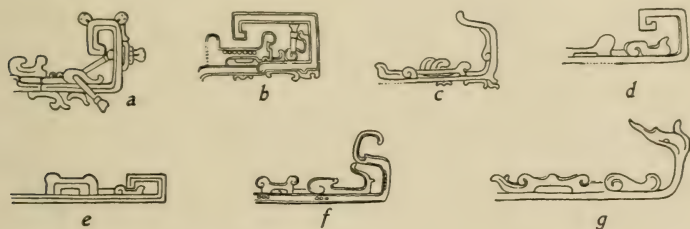


Fig. 29. Upper Part of Serpent Head made into a Fret Ornament: *a*, Ixkun; *b*, Quirigua; *c*, *d*, *g*, Copan; *e*, Naranjo; *f*, Seibal.

into the enrichment of all kinds of subjects. One of these is the double outline which is derived from the line paralleling the base of the serpent's body and serving to mark off the belly region. The second feature is the small circle applied in bead-like rows to represent scales. The profile serpent head is also seen in scrolls and frets that elaborate many details of dress worn by the human beings carved on the monuments. The front view of the serpent's head is usually extended to fill an oblong panel and is often used to decorate the base of a monument or the façade of a building. There are several monsters closely connected with the serpent that will be discussed as the description proceeds.

**The Human Figure.** The human beings pictured on Mayan monuments are captives, rulers, and priests or worshippers. The captives are poor groveling creatures, bound by rope, held by the hair or crushed under

foot to fill a rectangular space over which the conqueror stands. The rulers and priests are hard to distinguish from each other, perhaps because the government was largely theocratic and the ruler was looked upon as the spokesman of divinity. The spear and shield of war served to mark off certain human beings from others who carry religious objects such as the Ceremonial Bar and the Manikin Scepter.

Elaborate thrones are shown on several monuments—thrones canopied by the arched body of the Two-headed Dragon that bears symbols of the planets. Over all is seen the great Serpent Bird with outstretched wings. Upon the throne is seated a human being who may safely be called a king and a line of footprints on the front of the throne may symbolize ascent. On other monuments the commanding personage wears the mask of a god and wields a club to subdue or scatters grain to placate. On the great majority of monuments the human beings, richly attired in ceremonial regalia and carrying a variety of objects, possibly present the great warriors and priests of the day. Many of the early sculptures are stiff and formal, but in a number of instances the quality of actual portraiture is convincing.

**Design Composition and Perspective.** It is difficult to compare directly the graphic and plastic arts of different nations where the subject matter is diverse unless we compare them in accordance with absolute principles of design, composition, and perspective drawing. The Mayas produced one of the few really great and coherent expressions of beauty so far given to the world and their influence in America was historically as important as was that of the Greeks in Europe. Set as we are in the matrix of our own religious and artistic conventions, we find it difficult to



approach sympathetically beauty that is overcast with an incomprehensible religion. When we can bring ourselves to feel the serpent symbolism of the Mayan artists as we feel, for instance, the conventional halo



Fig. 30. Sculpture on Front of Lintel at Yaxchilan showing Man holding Two-Headed Serpent with a Grotesque God's Head in each of its Mouths.



Fig. 31. Types of Human Heads on the Lintels of Yaxchilan.

that crowns the ideal head of Christ, then we shall be able to recognize the truly emotional qualities of Mayan sculptures.

It is generally recognized that design to be successful must contain order of various sorts (in measurements, shapes, directions, tones, colors, etc.). In the simpler forms of decorative art the restrictions of technical process, as in basketry, may impose order, but in free-hand sculpture it must come from an educated sense of beauty involving selection and the reproduction of the

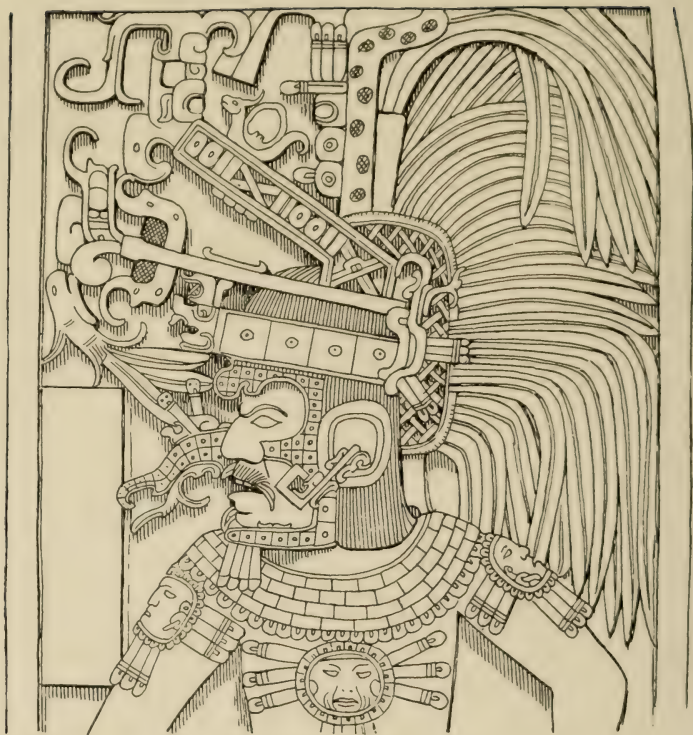


Fig. 32. Sculpture on Upper Part of Stela 11, Seibal. The man wears a mask of turquoise inlay and an elaborate headdress.

finest qualities. Design at its highest is embodied in the Mayan hieroglyphs. Given spaces had to be filled with given symbols and the results attained were uniformly excellent. Although the influence of the serpent led to the great use of tapering flame-like masses in nearly all Mayan designs, still dominant vertical and horizontal lines of interest were maintained.

The panel and lintel sculptures show composition achieved by simple and subtle methods. The sweeping plumes of headdresses were skilfully used to fill in corners, while blocks of glyphs were placed in open spaces that might otherwise distract the attention. Many compositions appear overcrowded to us, but this fault decreases with knowledge of the subject matter. Also, the Mayas appear to have painted their sculptures so that the details were emphasized by color contrast.

In perspective as applied to the human figure the Mayas were far ahead of the Egyptians and Assyrians, since they could draw the body in front view and pure profile without the distortions seen in the Old World. They were even able to make graceful approximations of a three-quarters view, as may be seen in Plate XVI, where the raising of the nearer shoulder has a distinct perspective value.

**The Mayan Pantheon.** We have seen that during the earliest culture of Mexico and Central America there were no figurines of individualized gods, simply straightforward representations of human beings and animals. With the Mayan culture, however, we enter upon an epoch of rich religious symbolism. The serpent, highly conventionalized as we have just seen, and variously combined with elements taken from the quetzal, the jaguar, and even from man himself,



Plate XVI. Stela 13, Piedras Negras. This shattered monument is one of the finest examples of Mayan Sculpture, showing a fine sense of composition and a considerable knowledge of perspective.



appears as a general indication of divinity. The Ceremonial Bar, essentially a two-headed serpent carrying in its mouths the heads of an important god,



Fig. 33. The Ceremonial Bar. A Two-Headed Serpent held in the Arms of Human Beings on Stelae: *a*, Stela P, Copan; *b*, Stela N, Copan.



Fig. 34. The Manikin Scepter, a Grotesque Figure with one Leg modified into a Serpent.

is one of the earliest religious objects. The heads that appear in the mouths are usually those of a Roman-nosed or of a Long-nosed god. Other representations of divinities are combined with the Two-headed Dragon that also has reptilian characters; still others appear as headdresses and masks on human figures. Strange to say, the gods are supplementary to the human figures on all the early sculptures. In the codices, however, they are represented apart from man, as engaged in various activities and contests. Mayan religion was clearly organized on a dualistic basis. The powers for good are in a constant

struggle with the powers for evil and most of the benevolent divinities have malevolent duplicates. In actual form the gods are partly human, but ordinarily the

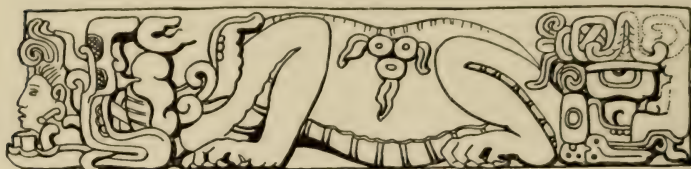


Fig. 35. The Two-Headed Dragon, a Monster that passes through many Forms in Mayan Sculpture. Copan.

determining features are grotesque variations from the human face and figure. While beast associations are sometimes discernible, they are rarely controlling. Sometimes, however, beast gods are represented in unmistakable fashion, good examples being the jaguar, the bat, and the moan bird. All of these have human bodies and animal heads.

The head position in the Mayan pantheon may with some assurance be given to a god who has been called the Roman-nosed god and who is probably to be identified with Itzamna. According to Spanish writers Itzamna was regarded by the Mayas as the creator and father of all, the inventor of writing, the founder of the Mayan civilization, and the god of light and life. The Zeus of the Mayas is represented in the form of an old man with a high forehead, a strongly aquiline nose, and a distended mouth that is usually devoid of teeth. On the ancient monuments he is frequently seen in the mouths of the Ceremonial Bar and also in association with the sun, moon, and the planet Venus. In the codices he is shown as a protector of the Maize God and in other acts beneficial to man. There is, however, a

malevolent aspect of this god or possibly another being who imitates his features but not his qualities. This being may be an old woman goddess who wears a serpent headdress and who is associated with destructive floods, the very opposite of life-giving sunshine.

Of almost equal importance to the Roman-nosed god is a god whose face is a more or less humanized serpent. This god has been identified with Kukulcan, the Plumed Serpent, and the Mayan equivalent of the Aztec Quetzalcoatl. On the early monuments this god is shown in connection with the Ceremonial Bar. He also appears at a somewhat later date as the Manikin Scepter, an object in the form of a manikin that is held out by a leg modified into a serpent's body. Since a celt is usually worn in the forehead of the manikin it has been suggested that this curious object represents a ceremonial battle-ax. The face of the Long-nosed god is frequently worn by high priests and rulers either as a headdress or, more rarely, as a mask. It is possible that this divinity was regarded as primarily a war god. In the codices he is evidently a universal deity of varied powers. Especially he is shown in connection with water and maize and it seems likely that his principal function was to cause life-giving rain. A malevolent variant of the Long-nosed god has a bare bone for the lower jaw, a sun symbol on his forehead, and a headdress consisting of three symbols of uncertain significance. This head is associated with the Two-headed Dragon possibly as a god of death-dealing drought.

Ahpuch, the Lord of Death, was the principal malevolent god. His body as figured in the codices is a strange compound of skeletal and full-fleshed parts. His head is a skull except for the normal ears. His spinal column is usually bare and sometimes the ribs as well, but the arms and legs are often covered with flesh. As added

symbols black spots and dotted lines are sometimes drawn upon his body and a curious device like a percentage sign upon his cheek. The Death God in complete form is rarely shown in the earlier sculptures, although grinning skulls and interlacing bones occur as temple decorations. As has already been pointed out, Mayan religion was strongly dualistic and the evil

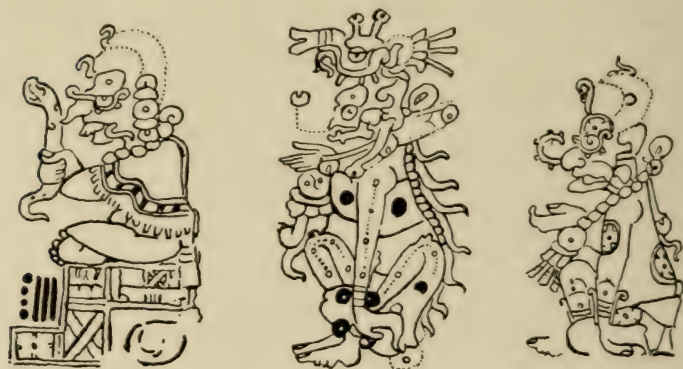


Fig. 36. Gods in the Dresden Codex: God B, the Long-Nosed God of Rain; God A, the Death God; God G, the Sun God.

powers are usually to be identified by death symbols such as a bare bone for the lower jaw, or the percentage symbol noted above on the cheek. Death heads of several kinds are frequent in the hieroglyphic inscriptions.

The Maize God, figured so frequently on the ancient monuments and in the Mayan codices may be the same that in the time of the Conquest was called Yum Kaax, Lord of the Harvest. He is represented as a youth with a leafy headdress that is possibly meant to represent an opening ear of maize. The *kan* sign, a grain of maize, is constantly associated with him. He appears to be at





Plate XVII. (a) The Upper Portion of Stela 1 at Yaxchilan, dealing with the Heavens. The Sky God is seen in the center with the moon at the left and the sun god at the right. Below these is the Two-Headed Monster bearing planet signs and additional heads of the Sky God; (b) Analogous Detail of Stela 4, Yaxchilan. The moon is at the right and the sun at the left. The figure in the sun is male and that in the moon, female. The faces of the Sky God hang from the lower part of the Two-Headed Dragon, being attached to it by symbols of the planet Venus.

the mercy of the evil deities when not protected by the good ones.

Space considerations forbid a further study of Mayan gods. Suffice it to say that several other divinities are shown in the sculptures and codices including a somewhat youthful appearing war god, as well as a more mature and grotesque war god called Ek Ahau, the Black Captain. There is an old god with a shell attached to his body, a god with the face of a monkey who is associated with the north star, a god in the form of a frog and another in the form of a bat. In the Spanish accounts we can also glean scanty information concerning Ixchel, Goddess of the Rainbow and mate of Itzamna, Ixtubtun patroness of jade carvers, Ixchebel-yax, patroness of the art of weaving and decorating cloth, etc.

**The Mayan Time Counts.** The passage of time, seen in finer and finer degree in the course of human life, the succession of summer and winter, the waxing and waning moons, the alternation of day and night, the upward and downward sloping of the sun and the swinging dial of the stars, is a phenomenon that no human group has failed to notice. Longer periods than those included within the memory of the oldest men (presenting an imperfect reflection of the memory of men still older) are found only in those favored centers where a serviceable system of counting had been developed. Mythology has a content of history but hardly of chronology. Tradition, when organized by the priesthood, may be reasonably dependable for perhaps two hundred years.

The year and the month are the basis of all primitive time systems, the former depending on the recurring seasons, the latter on recurring moons. Both of these are expressed in days. Unfortunately, the day is not

contained evenly in either the month or the year, nor do these larger time measures show any simple relation to each other as regards length. The history of the calendar is one of compromise and correction.

The Mayan calendars were made possible by: first, the knowledge of astronomical time periods; second, the possession of a suitable notation system; third, the discovery of a permutation system of names and numbers.

**Elements of the Day Count.** There is reason to believe that the Mayas had first a lunar calendar of twelve months of thirty days each, making a year of 360 days, and that they modified this so that the number of days in the "month" became twenty instead of thirty to agree with the value of the second digit in their notation system and that the number of months was increased from twelve to eighteen, still making up a total of 360 days which agreed with the value of the third digit. With a truer knowledge of the length of the year an extra five day month was added to make a year of 365 days. Beyond this the "leap year" error was calculated but not interpolated. As proof that the lunar month of thirty days preceded the notation month of twenty days, it need only be pointed out that the name for this period, *uinal*, seems to be connected with the name for moon, *u*, and that the hieroglyph for moon has the value, twenty, in the inscriptions and ancient books.

Before entering into a fuller discussion of the astronomical and notational facts let us turn for a moment to the third fact, the permutation system. The origin of the cycle<sup>1</sup> known by the Nahuatl name *tonalamatl*,

<sup>1</sup> The word *cycle* is applied in this book to re-entering series, or wheels, of days. These all contain the *tonalamatl* without a remainder. The word *period* is applied to fixed numbers that do not contain the *tonalamatl*. Unfortunately, the word *cycle* is also applied to the fifth digit or position in the notation system and the word *period* is used as a general designation for any digit or position as well as for other fixed values.



book of the days, has never been satisfactorily explained. It is a permutation system with two



Fig. 37. The Twenty Day Signs of the Mayan Month. The first example in each case is taken from the inscriptions and the second from the codices.

factors, 13 and 20. The former is a series of numbers (1-13) and the latter a series of twenty names as follows:—

- |             |          |           |           |
|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Imix     | 6. Cimi  | 11. Chuen | 16. Cib   |
| 2. Ik       | 7. Manik | 12. Eb    | 17. Caban |
| 3. Akbal    | 8. Lamat | 13. Ben   | 18. Eznab |
| 4. Kan      | 9. Muluc | 14. Ix    | 19. Cauac |
| 5. Chicchan | 10. Oc   | 15. Men   | 20. Ahau  |

These two series revolve upon each other like two wheels, one with thirteen and the other with twenty cogs. The smaller wheel of numbers makes twenty revolutions while the larger wheel of days is making thirteen revolutions, and after this the number cog and name cog with which the experiment began are again in combination. Thus, a day with the same number and the same name recurs every  $13 \times 20$  or 260 days.

This 260 day cycle corresponds to no natural time period and is an invention pure and simple. It is the most fundamental feature of the Mayan time count and of the time counts of other nations in Mexico and Central America. We may perhaps assume that the



twenty names were originally those of the twenty days in the modified lunar months. But the thirteen numbers have no recognized prototype. The formal *tonalamatl* is generally considered to begin with 1 Imix for the Mayas and with a corresponding day for the other Mexican and Central American nations. But it can be made to begin anywhere and proceed to an equivalent station that is always 260 days removed.

TONALAMATL TABLE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	1
1 Imix.....	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1
2 Ik.....	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2
3 Akbal.....	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3
4 Kan.....	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4
5 Chicchan.....	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5
6 Cimi.....	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6
7 Manik.....	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7
8 Lamat.....	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8
9 Muluc.....	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9
10 Oc.....	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10
11 Chuen.....	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11
12 Eb.....	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12
13 Ben.....	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13
14 Ix.....	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1
15 Men.....	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2
16 Cib.....	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3
17 Caban.....	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4
18 Eznab.....	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5
19 Cauac.....	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6
20 Ahau.....	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7

**The Conventional Year.** It has been stated that the Mayas arrived at a conventional 365 day year made up of eighteen months of twenty days each plus a short period of five days that fell after the eighteen regular months had been counted. The Mayan month names are as follows:-

- |         |           |            |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| 1. Pop  | 7. Yaxkin | 13. Mac    |
| 2. Uo   | 8. Mol    | 14. Kankin |
| 3. Zip  | 9. Chen   | 15. Muan   |
| 4. Zotz | 10. Yax   | 16. Pax    |
| 5. Tzec | 11. Zac   | 17. Kayab  |
| 6. Xul  | 12. Ceh   | 18. Cumhu  |

19. Uayeb (five additional days)

Since there are twenty days or positions in the month and likewise twenty distinct day names in the *tonalamatl* that fall in regular order it follows that each day would always occupy the same month position were it not for



Fig. 38. The Nineteen Month Signs of the Mayan Year. The first example in each case is taken from the inscriptions and the second from the codices. The last details are signs for zero.

the offset at the end of each year caused by the short Uayeb period. As it is, any day name occupies the same position during the course of an entire year and a position five days in advance during the course of the following year. Since five is contained four times in twenty there can be only four shifts: the fifth year showing the same arrangement as the first. The following table gives the month positions of each day name during the changes of four consecutive years as these are recorded in the ancient inscriptions.

Ik, Manik, Eb, Caban	0, 5, 10, 15
Akbal, Lamat, Ben, Eznab	1, 6, 11, 16
Kan, Muluc, Ix, Cauac	2, 7, 12, 17
Chicchan, Oc, Men, Ahau	3, 8, 13, 18
Imix, Cimi, Chuen, Cib	4, 9, 14, 19

Thus Ik occupies 0 position the first year, 5, the second

year, 10 the third, 15 the fourth, and 0 the fifth. While Manik that belongs to the same set has position 5 the first year, 10 the second, etc. It will be noted that Imix, the first day of the formal *tonalamatl* is never the first day of a month.

**The Calendar Round.** But this assignment of particular day names to particular places in the month does not close the problem. Each day name is associated in the *tonalamatl* with a day number. While it is true that each day can occupy only four month places of as many years, it must be remembered that the day numbers associated with these names can run the whole gamut of 13 changes. The result of this permutation is that a particular day with a particular number can occupy a particular month position once every  $13 \times 4$  or 52 years. In other words, the cycle of variations runs through the least common multiple of 260 (the *tonalamatl*) and 365 (the conventional year) or 18,980 days. This cycle is commonly known as the Calendar Round.

A Mayan day fixed in a month has four parts to its name, thus, 11 Ahau 18 Mac. But after all this condition of affairs is not very different from our own. We say Tuesday, July 4, and we mean, "Tuesday, the second day of the week, falls on the fourth day of the month of July." Similarly the Mayan date 11 Ahau 18 Mac may be read, "The day Ahau, bearing the index number 11 (or, being the eleventh day in the thirteen day week) is found in the 18th position in the month Mac." Were it not for leap year the European date given above would recur after seven years: as it is, the cycle is somewhat irregular and no actual use is made of it. So far we have considered two sorts of Mayan dates, first the *tonalamatl* date, recurring every 260 days, second the calendar round date recurring every 18,980 days.

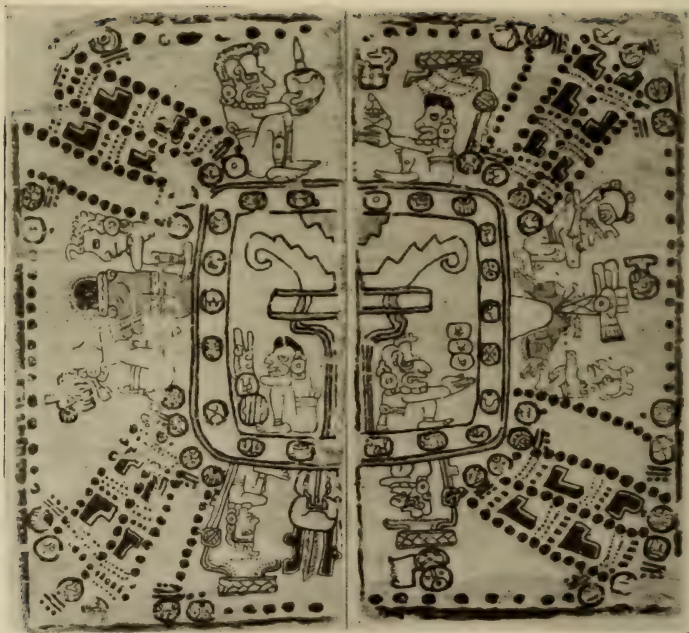


Plate XVIII. Scheme of the Mayan Calendar as presented in the Codex Tro-Cortesianus. In the center is Itzamna, the God of the Sky, and his spouse, under what has been called the celestial tree. The band of hieroglyphs that frames in this picture contains the twenty day signs of the Mayan month. The figures on the outside are arranged in four groups, according to the four directions of the compass. At the top or east we again see Itzamna and his mate. In the north, or right hand quarter, human sacrifice is shown and the Death God sits opposite the God of War. In the east and in the south are also shown pairs of divinities. A series of dots running from one day sign to another covers the *tonalamatl* or 260 day cycle of names and numbers.



**Mayan Numbers.** We will now see how the record of the days is written down in actual symbols. Mayan numbers are most commonly represented by bars and dots, the bars counting five and the dots one. The no-

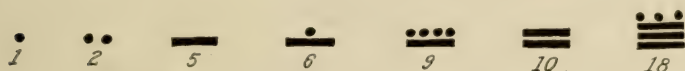


Fig. 39. Bar and Dot Numerals of the Mayas.

tation is based for the most part upon twenties rather than upon tens and each digit, if this term can be applied to figures that run from 0 to 19, may consist of several bars and dots arranged in a group. Ascending values may be expressed by position, one above the other, or by so-called period glyphs which stand beside each group of bars and dots and represent the multiplier.

In our decimal system the number 347,981, for instance, is really:—

3 x	100000
4 x	10000
7 x	1000
9 x	100
8 x	10
1 x	1

When written out in a horizontal line each “position” has a value ten times that of the “position” to the right of it. It is understood that a digit which stands in a “position” is to be multiplied by 1, 10, 100, 1000, etc., as the case may be.

Now in a system of notation based entirely upon twenties the ascending values are 1, 20, 400, 8000, 160,000, etc. Such a system was probably used by the Mayas for ordinary commercial purposes. But in the counting of days a slight change was made, in that the third “position”

was only eighteen times the preceding one instead of twenty times, or 360 instead of 400. The 360 was probably adopted because it comes within five days of the length of the year. After this change the ascending values are 1, 20, 360, 7,200, and 144,000. A Mayan number can be written conveniently in imitation of our own system by marking dashes between the "positions" or periods. The long number that is set down as follows 9-12-16-7-8, equals:—

9 x	144000	1,296,000
12 x	7200	86,400
16 x	360	5,760
7 x	20	140
8 x	1	8
		<hr/>
		1,388,308

days in the decimal system. In speaking of such a number, however, names would be applied to the periods, thus:—

Cycle	144000 days
Katun	7200 days
Tun	360 days
Uinal	20 days
Kin	1 day

The number given above would be read 9 cycles, 12 katuns, 16 tuns, 7 uinals, and 8 kins. It is convenient to remember that a tun is a little less than a year, a katun, a little less than twenty years, and a cycle a little less than four hundred years.

**The True Year.** So far we have been concerned primarily with the counting of days—the astronomical time unit determined by the revolution of the earth upon its axis. Now, although the day is not contained evenly in the other astronomical time periods (the month, the year, and the apparent revolutions of the planets) the Mayan scholars made some remarkable correlations of the heterogeneous data.

The year is determined by the revolution of the earth around the sun and by the recurring seasons. No agricultural people could neglect this time period with its



Fig. 40. Face Numerals found in Mayan Inscriptions. In most cases these are the faces of gods. Reading from left to right: the values are 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10.



Fig. 41. The Normal Forms of the Period Glyphs. Reading from left to right: cycle, katun, tun, uinal, kin.



Fig. 42. Face Forms of Period Glyphs. From left to right: introducing glyph, cycle, katun, tun, uinal, kin.

obvious relation to planting and harvest. Reference has already been made to the notational 360 day year (tun) and to the conventional 365 day year (haab). The statement was then made that the Mayas made a correction for the excess of the true year over the conventional 365 day year. The excess amounts to about .24 of a day and their correction seems to have been one day in four years for ordinary purposes and 25 days in 104 years over longer stretches of time. This latter correction is more accurate than was that of the Julian

## Introducing Glyph

### Initial Series

1. 9 cycles
2. 14 katuns
3. 13 tuns (written 12 by error)
4. 4 uinals
5. 17 kins
6. 12 Caban (day)

### Supplementary Series

7. glyph F
8. (a) glyph D, (b) glyph C
9. (a) glyph X, (b) glyph B
10. (a) glyph A (30 day lunar month)
10. (b) 5 Kayab (month)

### Explanatory Series

11, 12, 13 and 14a, possibly explain the dates

### Secondary Series

- 14b, 3 kins, 13 uinals  
15a, 6 tuns (to be added)

### Period Ending Date

16. 4 Ahau 13 Yax (9-15-0-0-0)

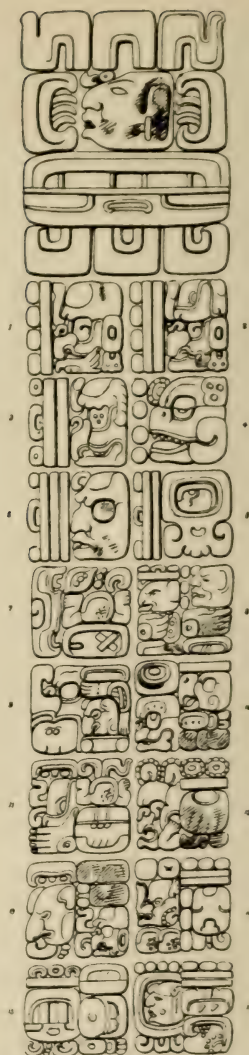


Plate XIX. Typical Mayan Inscription.



calendar and nearly as accurate as that of the present Gregorian calendar put into service as late as 1582.

The true length of the year was probably obtained by observations of sunrise or sunset on summer or winter solstices. From some fixed point of observation, such as the doorway of a temple, the extreme point on the horizon reached by the sun in its northward or southward march could be accurately determined. Over a period of years the average solstitial period (tropical year) could be readily obtained if only the days were recorded and the intervals compared.

Although we ourselves depend mostly upon the year count rather than the day count we must remember that the annual calendar was only one of several that the Mayas brought into relation to the inviolable count of days. The lunar and Venus calendars will be considered presently. But if the "leap year" days were not interpolated, of course, the named months had no fixed positions in the year but swung slowly round the circle. According to the table of Landa, compiled about 1566, the month Pop, which seems to have been regarded as the first of the year in ancient as well as modern times, began on July 16 O.S. Outside of the Mayan area the retrogression of the months is attested by actual statements of early Spanish writers. But the conventional 365 day year was, after all, sufficiently accurate to serve the needs of agriculturists and since retrogression was only about one day in four years, associations between the months and the seasons would hold true for the average lifetime.

**The Lunar Calendar.** The revolution of the moon around the earth was used by the Mayas in what may be called the lunar calendar. It has already been explained that an early lunar period of thirty days seems

to have been arbitrarily changed to a notational one of twenty days. Now the exact duration of a lunar revolution is 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, 2.87 seconds. If the customary period of 29.5 days is taken for convenience there is an error of about two full days in five years. Such an error was too great to pass the Mayan calendar makers. On pages 51 to 58 of the Dresden



Fig. 43. Representations of the Moon: *a*, sun and moon hieroglyphs; *b*, moon from a "celestial band"; *c*, moon hieroglyph used for 20 in codices.

Codex their solution is recorded unmistakably. A succession of 405 lunar revolutions, or nearly 33 years is calculated by the addition of groups of five and six revolutions, the former given as 148 days and the latter as either 177 or 178 days. This method of calculation may have been a device to carry fractions or it may have been based upon ecliptic data. The steps of the calculations are put down in a sort of double entry, first by numbers, second by named days. The numbers add up to 11,958 while the total difference between the named days is 11,959. The purpose appears to have been to approximate 11,960. This last number of days contains the *tonalamatl* an even number of times and would thus form a re-entering series since it would always begin with the same day. Now it is a remarkable fact that the total obtained by modern astronomers for 405 lunar revolutions is 11,959.888 days or only 0.112 of a day less than 11,960. Therefore, this re-entering series of the Mayan astronomers can be used nine times be-

fore an error amounting to one whole day has accumulated. In other words, the lunar calendar was brought into a fixed relation with the day count with an error of one day in 300 years.

On the monuments a more or less orderly group of hieroglyphs following the Initial Series has been called the Supplementary Series. Several of these hieroglyphs contain the symbol for the moon and the last one contains this symbol with the numerals 9 or 10 to the right or below. It has been suggested that this



Fig. 44. The Last Glyph of the Supplementary Series: *a*, moon glyph; combined with the numeral 9 or 10 to indicate a 29 or a 30 day lunar month.

last glyph stands for a 29 or 30 day month, as the case may be, and that the Supplementary Series records the position of the Initial Series date in a lunar count.

**The Venus Calendar.** The Mayan astronomers possessed a remarkable knowledge of the movements of the planets. In particular the apparent revolution of the planet Venus was used as the basis of what we may call the Venus Calendar. The mean synodical year of Venus (nearly 584 days) is divided in the Mayan books into four parts of 236 days (morning star), 90 days (superior conjunction), 250 days (evening star), and 8 days (inferior conjunction). It is true that these divisions do not agree very closely with the actual divisions of the Venus year but we must remember that the observations were made without instruments, that the planet cannot be seen by the naked eye when close to



the sun, and that it appears much smaller, because farther from the earth, when near the superior conjunction. Moreover, we must expect beliefs as to the nature of this planet, personified as a god, to supplement the knowledge gained from actual observations.

The agreement in length between 8 solar years of 365 days each and 5 Venus years of 584 days each was recognized and used in ceremonies and calculations. On the five pages of the Dresden Codex, numbered 46-50, is presented a series of 5 Venus years amounting in all to 2920 days. On page 24 (see Pl. XX) of the same codex we find this sum taken 13 times to make 37,960 days and then this last number taken 4 times to make 151,840 days. The number 2920 ( $5 \times 584$  and  $8 \times 365$ ) has a definite relation to the *tonalamatl* which results from the following coincidence: 260 and 584 have a common factor of 4. It therefore follows that when groups of 584 days are counted consecutively along with the twenty named days in the standard *tonalamatl*, these groups of 584 days can begin on only five different days. The sixth period is introduced by the same named day as the first but this named day is associated with a different number. The same named day combined with the same number recurs in  $13 \times 2920$  or 37,960 days. This round of the Venus calendar (65 Venus years of 584 days and 104 solar years of 365 days) equals exactly two rounds of the solar calendar.

But there is an important correction that has to be made to keep the actual solar calendar in accord with the actual Venus calendar. The solar year is really 365.24 days in length and we have seen that this error was corrected by a marginal addition of 25 days in 104 years. The mean Venus year is really 583.92 or .08 of a day less than 584. The actual position of Venus will therefore run ahead of its calendrical position and there



is reason to believe that a marginal subtraction amounting to two days in 25 revolutions was made.

On Stela K at Quirigua (a cast of this monument is exhibited in the American Museum) we find what appears to be an effort to calculate the errors of the different calendars. The introducing glyph contains the symbol of Venus and it is not unlikely that the calculations deal in part with the movements of this planet. The initial series records the end of an even 5 tun period (9-18-15-0-0) in the notation system but the number (1,431,000 days) equals 3920 years of 365 days each plus 200 days. On the basis of "five to eight" the 3920 solar calendar years equal 2950 revolutions of Venus and allowing an error of .08 of a day per revolution the total error amounts to 196 days. This very nearly equals the 200 days counted in advance of the 3920 solar calendar years. The Mayan scholars seem to have observed the fact that counting from the original 4 Ahau 8 Cumhu up to their own times, the actual position of Venus practically coincided with the end of a 5 tun period when it should have coincided with the end of 3920 solar calendar years. This supposition is made more credible by evidence that the error in the solar calendar from the same beginning day was also calculated here. From the Initial Series date, which leads to 3 Ahau 3 Yax, 10 uinals and 10 kins (210 days) are subtracted and the day 1 Oc 18 Kayab is reached. Then follows the Supplementary Series which doubtless refers to the lunar count and immediately after this comes the unusual number 0 uinals 0 kins—that is, nothing. Next the day 3 Ahau 3 Yax is repeated, thus:—

9-18-15- 0- 0	3 Ahau 3 Yax
10-10	backward
9-18-14- 7-10	1 Oc 18 Kayab
0- 0	forward
9-18-15- 0- 0	3 Ahau 3 Yax

Now it appears that some sort of an equation is intended by this subtraction of 210 days and the subsequent addition of zero days to arrive again at the point of departure. The error due to the omission of the extra "leap year" day would amount to two full years plus 210 days in the time covered by the Initial Series. The two full years could be dropped from the calculation and the 210 days would show the apparent displacement of the sun from its assumed calendrical position. Of course, it is not to be supposed for an instant that the Mayas had kept an actual record of the movements of the heavenly bodies for 4000 years. They probably based their original point of departure—the day 4 Ahau 8 Cumhu—upon some calculated correlation which afterwards proved to be slightly erroneous. With a clearer understanding of the length of the year and of the revolution of Venus they may have attempted on this monument to record the accumulated error on theoretical rather than actual grounds.

**Hieroglyphs.** Mayan hieroglyphs resemble the Egyptian and Chinese hieroglyphs only in being "sacred writing" that is not based upon an alphabet. The styles and symbols are entirely different. No Rosetta Stone has yet been discovered to give us inscriptions in more than one system of writing in Central America. The great use of hieroglyphic inscriptions on monuments was characteristic of the earlier period of Mayan history and at a later time the writing was reduced to books. Landa obtained what he supposed was a Mayan alphabet, but what he really obtained was a list of word signs containing among other sounds the particular sounds he desired.

The phonetic use of syllables rather than of simple sounds or letters is probably an important feature of Mayan writing. Many hieroglyphs are pictographic

and consist of abbreviated pictures of the thing intended or of some object connected with it. Often a head stands for the entire body. The following list practically exhausts our knowledge of Mayan hieroglyphs:—

1. The 20 day signs which occur in variant forms in the inscriptions and codices.

2. The 19 month signs.

3. The face signs for numbers from zero to 19.

4. The "period glyphs" which represent 1, 20, 360, 7,200, and 144,000 days.

5. The symbols for the four directions and possibly for the four colors associated with them.

6. The hieroglyphs of several gods mostly from the codices.

7. The symbols of the sun, moon, Venus, North Star, and perhaps other heavenly bodies.

8. A few more or less realistic hieroglyphs representing natural objects.

Of this brief list many signs connected with the calendar are given by Landa and other signs have been worked out by means of the mathematical calculations in the codices and inscriptions which are capable of proof.

We may expect to find in the Mayan inscriptions some hieroglyphs that give the names of individuals, cities, and political divisions and others that represent feasts, sacrifices, tribute, and common objects of trade as well as signs referring to birth, death, establishment, conquest, destruction, and other fundamentals of individual and social existence. These signs taken with directive signs and dates would make possible records of considerable accuracy. There seems to be no possibility of purely literary inscriptions. While progress will necessarily be slow there is no reason for despair and without doubt the greater portion of Mayan inscriptions will finally be deciphered.

As an example of the phonetic use of signs in the building up of hieroglyphs let us take the common sign *kin*, meaning "sun." This sign appears regularly in the glyphs for the world directions east and west, the Mayan names being *likin* and *chikin* and also in the month sign



Fig. 45. Hieroglyphs of the Four Directions: East, North, West, South.

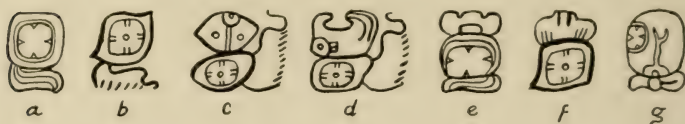


Fig. 46. Hieroglyphs containing the Phonetic Element *kin*: a-b, *kin*; c, *li-kin*; d, *chi-kin*; e-f, *yax-kin*; g, *kan-kin*.

*yaxkin*, and sometimes in that for *kankin*. It also appears as the sign for the lowest period in the time count having the value of a single day and called *kin*. The sun sign pure and simple is a circle with four notches on the inner side. The beard which is often attached to the *kin* sign may belong to the face of the sun god. This face is sometimes used as a substitute for the simple *kin* sign in certain positions. All the words so far considered contain the syllable *kin*. Now this *kin* sign also appears in many undeciphered hieroglyphs and in some of these it seems likely that it has a phonetic value. Other signs with definite values in several glyphs are *yax*, *tun*, *zac*, etc. This general method of writing is seen in more decipherable form among the Aztecs. The glosses of the early priests that have proved so great a help in the case



of the Aztecan writing are absent from the few Mayan documents.

**Codices.** Only three ancient Mayan books or codices are known to exist and these are more or less incomplete. They have all been reproduced in facsimile and are known by the following names: Dresden Codex, Peresianus Codex, Tro-Cortesianus Codex.

These illuminated manuscripts are written on both sides of long strips of maguey paper, folded like Japanese screens. The paper was given a smooth surface by a coating of fine lime and the drawings were made in black and in various colors. From the early accounts we know that books were also written on prepared deerskin and upon bark. Concerning their subject matter we are told that the Mayas had many books upon civil and religious history, and upon rites, magic, and medicine. The three books named above have been carefully studied. They treat principally of the calendar and of associated religious ceremonies.

A page of the Dresden Codex containing some interesting calculations is reproduced herewith. The numbers with the digits one above the other are transcribed in two diagrams. In the upper diagram the bar and dot numerals are simply put over into Arabic numerals and the Mayan system of periods or positions is retained. In the lower diagram these numbers are reduced entirely to the Arabic system. The columns are lettered at the top, the hieroglyphs are counted off in sixteen rows at the left and the separate groupings of numbers are shown in five sections at the right.

Among the hieroglyphs the Venus sign is especially prominent. At the base of B is given a number in five periods that, counted from the normal beginning day 4 Ahau 8 Cumhu, leads to 1 Ahau 18 Kayab. This day is actually recorded immediately under the number and

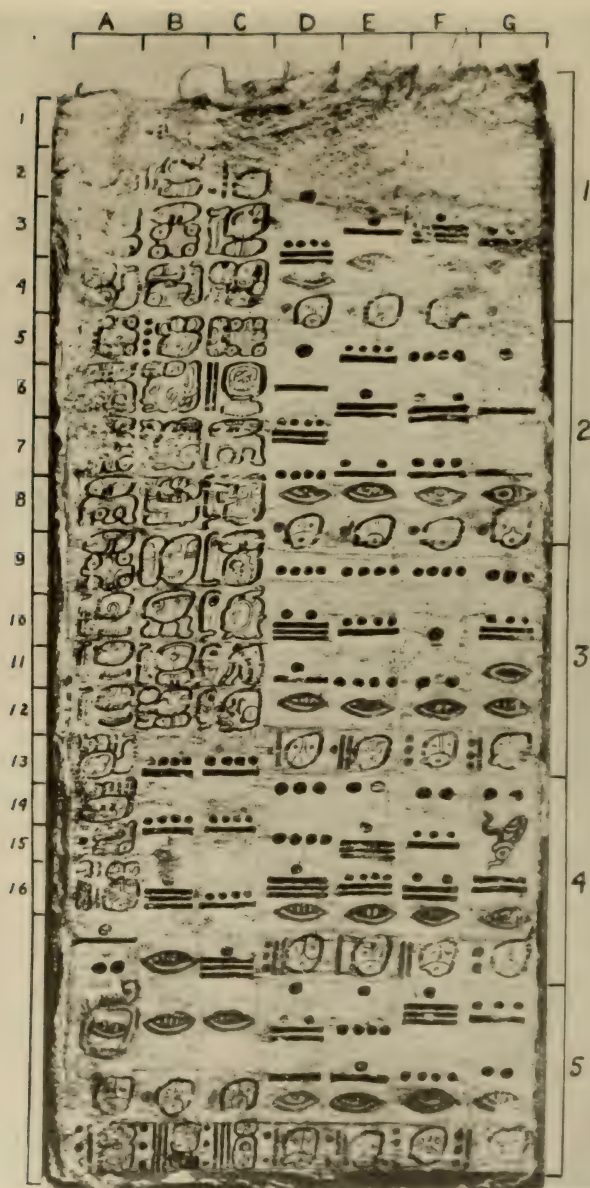


Plate XX. Page 24 Dresden Codex.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
1	Hieroglyphs			1				1
2				1	15	10	5	
3				1	16	10	5	
4				14	6	16	8	
5				0	0	0	0	
6				1 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	
7				1				2
8				5	9	4	1	
9				14	11	12	5	
10				4	7	8	5	
11				0	0	0	0	
12				1 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	
13				4	4	4	3	
14				17	9	1	13	3
15				6	4	2	0	
16				0	0	0	0	
				6 Ahau	11 Ahau	3 Ahau	8 Ahau	
		9	9	3	2	2	2	
		9	9	4	16	8	0	4
		16	9	16	14	12	10	
				0	0	0	0	
				13 Ahau	5 Ahau	10 Ahau	2 Ahau	
	6	0	16	1	1			
	2	0	0	12	4	16	8	5
	0			5 [8]	6	4	2	
				0	0	0	0	
	4 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	7 Ahau	12 Ahau	4 Ahau	9 Ahau	
	8 Cumhu	18 Kayab	18 Uo					

Diagram showing partial reduction of Mayan numbers into Arabic Numbers in the calculation shown on page 24 of the Dresden Codex (Plate XX.)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
	Hieroglyphs			151,840	113,880	75,920	37,960	1
				1 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	
				185,120	68,900	33,280	9,100	2
				1 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	
				35,040	32,120	29,200	26,280	3
				6 Ahau	11 Ahau	3 Ahau	8 Ahau	
				23,360	20,440	17,520	14,600	4
				13 Ahau	5 Ahau	10 Ahau	2 Ahau	
	2,200	1,366,560	1,364,360	11,680	8,760	5,840	2,920	5
	4 Ahau	1 Ahau	1 Ahau	7 Ahau	12 Ahau	4 Ahau	9 Ahau	
	8 Cumhu	18 Kayab	18 Uo					

Diagram showing complete reduction into Arabic numbers of the calculation shown on page 24 of the Dresden Codex (Plate XX).

possibly refers to some astronomical event or discovery. In column C the long number does not lead to the 1 Ahau 18 Uo that is given under it. This date is reached by other calculations, however. At the base of A is a number in three periods which amounts to 2200. Not only is this the difference between the long numbers in B and C ( $1,366,560 - 1,364,360 = 2200$ ) but, if we proceed forward 2200 days from the date given in B we arrive at a day 4 Ahau 8 Cumhu recorded under the number in A. In other words this number of days carries us forward to the end of the seventy-second calendar round after the original 4 Ahau 8 Cumhu ( $72 \times 18,980 = 1,366,560$ ).

Let us now make a new beginning in the lower left hand corner of this page. In G5 we find the number 2920 which as we have already seen is exactly the number of days consumed in eight years of 365 days or five synodic revolutions of Venus of 584 days. We will now see how the Mayan scholars arrived at  $13 \times 2920$  or 37,960, the calendar round of Venus. If we proceed towards the left in section 5 we find the second number, F5, is 5840 which equals  $2 \times 2920$ , the third is 8760 or  $3 \times 2920$ , and the fourth is 11,680 or  $4 \times 2920$ . The addition is continued in sections 4 and 3 till we reach 35,040 or  $12 \times 2920$ . To be sure the scribe made a slight error in one place, writing a 5 for an 8 but this is caught up by the day signs 9 Ahau, 4 Ahau, 7 Ahau, 12 Ahau, etc., that fall at regular intervals of 2920 days.

From section 3, the calculation jumps to section 1 where the numbers in the original are partly destroyed. They have, however, been restored with perfect assurance since the days in all instances are 1 Ahau and therefore must be separated by multiples of 260 days. The number in G1 has been restored as 5-5-8-0 or 37,960 or  $13 \times 2920$ . It contains 260 an even number of times and therefore every successive period of 37,960 days be-



gins with the same day, 1 Ahau. It also equals  $13 \times 8 \times 365$  or 104 years and  $13 \times 5 \times 584$  or sixty-five revolutions of Venus.

The three numbers to the left in F1, E1, and D1 are respectively 2, 3, and 4 times 37,960. The last number, 151,840 days is therefore equal to 416 years or exactly 8 calendar rounds of 18,980 days.

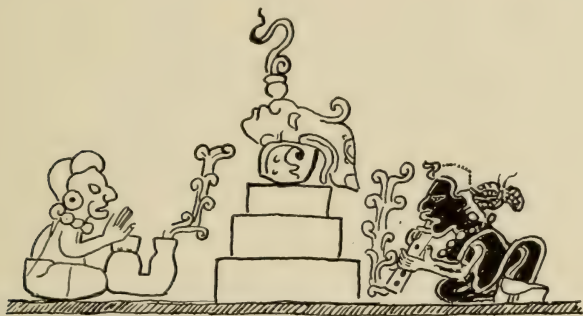
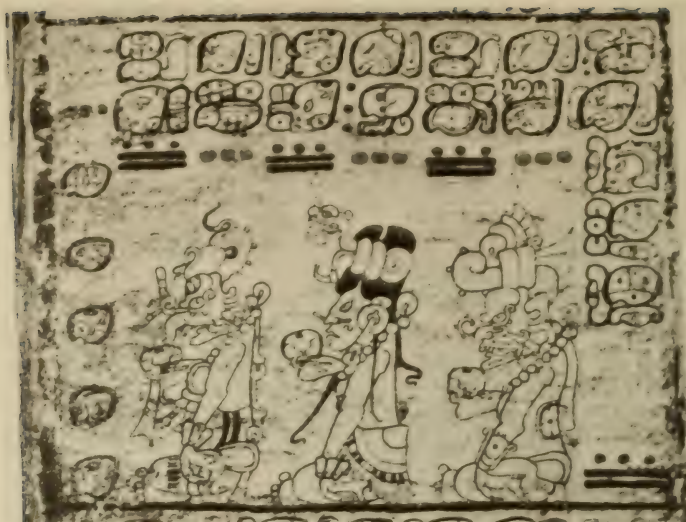


Fig. 47. Mayan Ceremony as represented in the Dresden Codex. The figure at the left beats a drum while the one on the right plays a flageolet. The sound is indicated by scrolls. The head on the pyramid is that of the Maize God and it rests upon the sign *caban*, meaning earth.

The numbers in section 2 are more difficult to explain but they possibly have to do with corrections and correlations of astronomical periods. If we add to 1 Ahau 18 Kayab which is recorded at the bottom of B we arrive at a day 1 Ahau 13 Mac. This day is prominent in more detailed calculations elsewhere in the Dresden Codex. If we add to the same 1 Ahau 18 Kayab the number in E 2 we arrive at 1 Ahau 18 Uo recorded at the bottom of C. Space permits no further explanation but the reader will see from the foregoing the method of experiment and cross checking that must be applied to the decipherment of the Mayan manuscripts. Fortunately, the relation-



[a]

III	1 East	2 ✱	5 North	6 ✱	9 West	10 ✱	13 South
	3 God B	4 †	7 Woman	8 Good Days	11 God G	12 † †	14 ✱
	13	III	13	III	13	III	15 God E
1 Akbal							16 Week of 13 days
2 Men							17 Ahau
3 Manik							13
4 Cauac							
5 Chuen							

[b]

Plate XXI. (a) Detail of the Dresden Codex showing *Tonal-amatl* used in Divination; (b) Analysis of the above *Tonalamatl*, according to Förstemann.

ships of numbers are absolute and the coincidences between the recorded numbers and astronomical periods are too close and frequent to be dismissed as accidental.

In addition to rational calculations dealing with astronomy one sees in the Mayan manuscripts many arrangements of the *tonalamatl* supposed to bring to light good and bad days and to forecast events. A section of the Dresden Codex showing a condensed *tonalamatl* is presented along with a diagram of its parts. At the top and right are seventeen hieroglyphs containing the symbols of the four directions, and of at least three of the principal gods. At the right is a column of five day signs with the number 3 at the head of the column. The *tonalamatl* is divided into five parts of fifty-two days each and each part is subdivided into four groups of three days each. It begins with 3 Akbal the day sign at the top of the column and after the four subdivisions of thirteen days each have been counted we arrive at the day 3 Men, the second day sign in the column. The count is repeated till the 260 days have been exhausted and we come back again to 3 Akbal. In the diagram the red numbers of the codex are represented by Roman numerals and the black numbers by Arabic numerals. Since the count in this example begins with 3 and the addition is always 13, or exactly one round of numbers the resultant days always have the number 3.

The three pictures of gods give us an inkling into the significance of this particular *tonalamatl*. All of the gods carry the *kan* or maize sign in their hands. The first god is the benevolent rain god and the third is the benevolent sun god. Between them is seated the malevolent goddess of floods with a serpent on her head. The maize god is not shown but his hieroglyph is given. The *tonalamatl* probably deals with agriculture

and may be an attempt to determine lucky days for planting.

**Bases of Mayan Chronology.** Several attempts have been made to bring about a concordance of Mayan and European chronology with widely varying results. Most of these attempts were made by developing a single line of evidence and some were based on assumptions that can now be disproved. But no single line of evidence should be deemed sufficient to decide this all important question. The general course of Mayan history is indicated unmistakably by three principal lines of evidence capable of being correlated with each other. These are:—

1st, Natural developments of sculpture, architecture, etc.

2nd, Inscribed dates on monuments.

3rd, Traditional history in the Books of Chilán Balam.

A fourth important line of evidence remains to be developed in the future. This relates to astronomical time. There is more than a suspicion that the Mayas were able to predict eclipses and there is a strong possibility that planetary conjunctions and other calculable phenomena were also recorded. Astronomical checks on chronology may possibly appear after a careful study of the calculations relating to Venus.

Natural developments in sculpture, etc., validate the contemporaneous and therefore historical character of many inscribed dates. In fact, the relative chronology of the cities of the first great Mayan period, coming over 600 years, is now upon a very certain basis. After the close of this period the dates were no longer inscribed. We are still able to indicate the course of change in the arts but we cannot express this in terms of years. Finally, in the books of Chilán Balam we have a dependable series of traditions affecting a considerable part of the





Plate XXII. Development in Style of Carving at Copan. Left to right; Stela 9; Stela 5; Stela N; Stela H; bottom, Details of architecture showing analogous development.

Mayan nation over a stretch of 1400 years previous to the Spanish Conquest. Now it seems certain that the traditional record overlaps the inscribed record so far as definite dating is concerned while the natural developments give aid and comfort to the simplest and most direct correlation.

**Historical Development of Art.** The sequence of Mayan monuments can be determined from a study of the style of sculpture. Beginning with the human form we find at Copan a remarkably homogeneous series of stelæ on which a royal or priestly personage stands erect and in front view. A Ceremonial Bar is held symmetrically in the two arms and the body is partly covered with rich and elaborate ornament. The amount of relief, the proportions of the body, the forms of the Ceremonial Bar, etc., all pass through a harmonious development. The earliest monuments show a crude block-like carving of the face, with protruding eyes, while the latest monuments have fully rounded contours. At Tikal the stelæ show, for the most part, human figures in profile, but unmistakable development can be seen in general quality of carving as well as in specific details.

In making comparisons in art it is always necessary to consider similar things. At many other Mayan cities than the two named above it is possible to obtain satisfactory evidence of sequence in art forms by cutting out similar details from different masses. Thus at Naranjo when we examine all the Ceremonial Bars we find a remarkable development of flamboyant detail on the later monuments. At Quirigua the faces on the tops of the altars may be compared with the same result. At Piedras Negras the heads of the Two-headed Dragon that occur in exactly similar positions on four monuments likewise show a steady modification towards flamboyancy

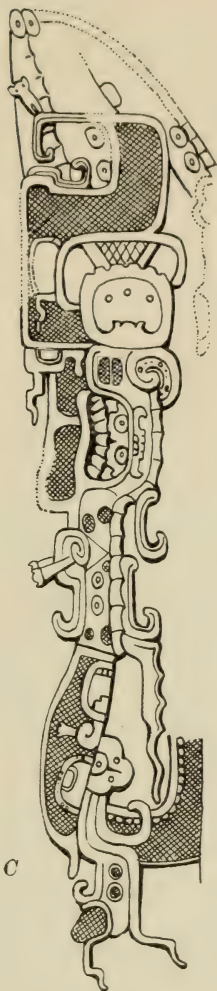


Fig. 48. The Front Head of the Two-Headed Dragon on Stelæ at Piedras Negras showing the Increase in Flamboyant Treatment. The interval between (a) and (b) is 125 years, that between (b) and (c) is 45 years.



as may be seen from Fig. 48, where the front heads are put side by side.

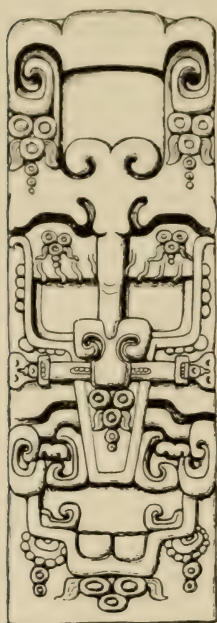


Fig. 49. Grotesque Face on the Back of Stela B, Copan.

taxed the structural ingenuity of the Mayan architects. The solving of this problem is marked by successive advances and since mechanical science goes forward rather than backward the relative order of structures is fairly certain. Moreover, many buildings are closely associated with dated monuments, tablets, lintels, or stelæ. Still another evidence of architectural sequence is seen in structures that have been enlarged by the ad-

Still other lines of evidence on historical sequence are to be gained from a study of architecture. Not only is it possible to determine the general developments that hold true of the entire Mayan area but also in a given city it is sometimes possible to arrange the buildings in their order of erection according to dependable criteria, both decorative and structural.

The earliest temples have narrow vaulted rooms, heavy walls, and a single doorway. The rooms increase in width, the walls decrease in thickness, the doorways multiply till the spaces between them become piers and finally columns. The support for the heavy roof comb



Fig. 50. Jaguar in Dresden Codex with a Water Lily attached to Forehead.



dition of wings or by the enclosing of the old parts under new masonry.

**Dated Monuments.** We have seen that many monuments carry hieroglyphic inscriptions containing dates in the Mayan system of counting time. It is impossible to read the texts that accompany these dates. But it is a remarkable fact that when we arrange the monuments in their artistic order we find that the inscribed dates in the great majority of cases fall in the same order. This leads us to conclude that the dates are practically contemporaneous with the carving and setting up of the monuments. Now the above is especially true when the inscription gives a simple Initial Series date. When more than one date is given the historic one appears in most instances to be the latest, but in a few instances it appears to be a specially emphasized intermediate date. In addition, then, to contemporaneous dates there are some that refer to the past and others that refer to the future.

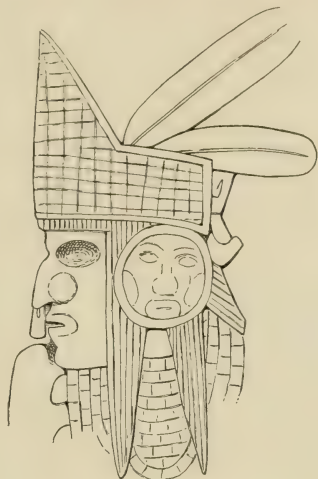


Fig. 51. Late Sculpture from Chichen Itza. The headdress resembles that worn by the rulers on the highlands of Mexico.

Some writers have assumed that the stelæ and other inscribed monuments were primarily time markers set up at the end of hotun (or five year) periods. This seems an unnecessarily narrow view. We can demonstrate that some inscriptions deal with astronomical facts cover-

ing long stretches of time. It is also apparent that many of the sculptures represent conquests and it is extremely likely that portraits of actual rulers are to be seen in certain carvings. It would be too much to expect events to happen regularly at the end of time periods and as a matter of fact we find at different cities repeated dates that do not occupy such positions. These repeated dates would seem to recall events of special importance to the city in question.

The running co-ordination between the apparent order of the artistic styles and inscribed dates permits us to measure very accurately the rate of change which was rapid, indeed, at certain times. The style of carving, on the other hand, enables us to put into definite 52 year periods many of the calendar round dates—if these are to be regarded as contemporaneous. The result is that for the First Empire, as it has been called, there is an exceedingly accurate chronology. After the fall and abandonment of the great southern cities dates are rare and we have to fall back upon remnants of history preserved after the coming of the Spaniards.

**Books of Chilán Balam.** The Books of Chilán Balam are digests of ancient chronicles preserved in the Mayan language but in Spanish script. The events are recorded as occurring in such and such a *katun*. Now the *katun* of these chronicles is exactly the same length as the *katun* or fourth position in the ancient Initial Series dates ( $20 \times 360$  or 7200 days). All *katuns* are completed on a day Ahau which may have any number from 1 to 13. In the *Kahlay katun ob* or "record of the *katuns*," which gives the actual sequence of the terminal Ahaus, the numbers fall as follows: 13, 11, 9, 7, 5, 3, 1, 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2, after which there is a repeat. The time covered by this wheel is  $13 \times 7200$  or 93,600 days (almost

260 years). In the ancient long count the *katuns* also ended with these days in the same order, but a month name and position were also given while the *katun* was designated by its coefficient. Thus 9-15-0-0-0 is ordinarily called Cycle 9, Katun 15. It ended with the day 4 Ahau 13 Yax. In the newer and less far-reaching system of the Books of Chilán Balam, this *katun* would be called simply Katun 4 Ahau.

**Correlation with Christian Chronology.** The record of the Books of Chilán Balam extends back to about 160 A. D. and while the early entries are not numerous and the historical character is somewhat clouded with mythology, we are given, nevertheless, material upon which to base a correlation with European chronology. A single monument bearing an Initial Series date exists at Chichén Itzá, and if historical it must have been carved during the early occupation of this city. According to the chronicles, Chichén Itzá was abandoned soon after 600 A. D. and was not re-established till about 960 A. D. There is only place in the later *katun* sequence of the chronicles where the recorded *katun* of the earlier system of the inscriptions can fall. For the Initial Series gives Cycle 10, Katun 2 and we know this ended with a day 3 Ahau and must therefore be placed in a Katun 3 Ahau. Now only one Katun 3 Ahau passed during the first occupation of Chichén Itzá. When this correlation is made the count of the chronicles is shown to begin with 9-0-0-0-0, a very significant "round number" date that marks the beginning of Mayan greatness.

The correlation of the Mayan *katun* count of the Books of Chilán Balam with the European calendar is not as definite as might be wished but the possibility of error seems to be not greater than four or five years. Future research will probably make it exact.

**Summary of Mayan History.** A brief summary of Mayan history is given below:—

#### PROTOHISTORIC PERIOD

Before 160 A.D.—9-0-0-0-0.

During this period the calendar and hieroglyphic systems were being developed. The earliest date is the somewhat doubtful one on the Tuxtla Statuette (113 B. C.). The next earliest date is the assured one on the Leiden Plate (47 A. D.). A very early monument at a site in northern Guatemala called Uaxactun has recently been discovered by Mr. S. G. Morley. The date, 8-14-10-13-15 falls within the limits set for this period.

#### EARLY PERIOD

160 A.D. to 358 A.D.—9-0-0-0-0 to 9-10-0-0-0.

During this period the great cities of the south had their start. Enormous mounds were erected and temples were built upon them. Public squares were laid out and in these were set up stelæ and altars. The earliest dated monument (except for the one referred to above) is Stela 3 at Tikal, 214 A. D. Several monuments at this city are carved in a still earlier style. Copan follows with Stela 15 which has a date thirty-seven years later. The carving throughout this period is crude and angular. The profile presentation of the human figure is better handled by the early artists than is front view presentation. The principal conventions of Mayan art seem to have been fixed during the protohistoric period and the serpent was much used as a motive of decoration during the archaic period. It seems likely that the archaic



pottery art of the arid highlands, discussed in the previous chapter, was still being made when Mayan art began its remarkable rise. The transitional types are doubtless to be assigned to the first three centuries of the Christian Era.

### MIDDLE PERIOD

358 A.D. to 455 A.D.—9-10-0-0-0 to 9-15-0-0-0.

Some of the most beautiful works of art belong to the middle period. While archaism did not actually disappear till the end of this period there is a certain purity of style and straightforwardness of presentation about many of these early sculptures. Flamboyancy is not apparent. At Copan the Great Mound was begun during this period and this enormous undertaking doubtless absorbed so much energy that few stelæ were set up. The best series of monuments from the middle period are seen at Naranjo and Piedras Negras.

### GREAT PERIOD

455 A.D. to 600 A.D.

A short brilliant period followed in which many cities flourished. In addition to the cities already mentioned there were Quirigua, Ixkun, Seibal, Holmul, Nakum, Cancuen, Yaxchilan, Palenque, etc. The art passes through some interesting changes, becoming more complex in certain features and less complex in others. The architecture makes great advances. Rooms become wider, walls thinner, and forms more refined and pleasing. The calculations in the inscriptions deal more and more with complicated astronomical subjects and historical Initial Series dates become less and less common and

finally cease. Many dates of the calendar round and period ending types are given. This brilliant epoch seems to have come to an end through civil war and social decadence. The references in the chronicles to this early period are very brief. The settlement of Bacalar is stated as well as the discovery of Chichen Itza. An Initial Series inscription at the later site gives us one of our latest historical dates and permits the correlation of the ancient dates with European chronology.

#### TRANSITION PERIOD

600 A. D. to 960 A. D.

The early Mayan cities seem to have been abandoned about 600 A.D. and a general shift towards the north seems to have taken place. Architecture was still kept up but pictorial sculpture practically disappeared. Certain cities south of Uxmal probably date from this decadent period, examples being Hochob and Dsibilnocac. At Xcalumkin there is an Initial Series date which may refer to about 910 A.D. The architectural styles form the only evidence of artistic sequence available, although if excavations were conducted it is possible that pottery would also help. In the chronicles this period falls, for the most part, after the first abandonment of Chichen Itza and while the Mayas were holding the land of Chakanputun. This land may be the central portion of the Yucatan peninsula.

#### PERIOD OF THE LEAGUE OF MAYAPAN

960 A. D. to 1195 A. D.

This period is characterized by a noteworthy revival of architecture occurring in northern Yucatan.

According to the chronicles the land of Chakanputun was abandoned by the tribe of Mayas known as the Itzas and Chichen Itza was re-established. About the same time Uxmal and Mayapan were also founded and a league between these three principal cities was instituted. Many other cities, such as Kabah, Labna, Sayil, and Izamal also seem to have flourished at this time but we have no traditions of any except Izamal. The architectural styles of decoration during this period are more formal than those of earlier times. The mask panel, a face reduced to a rectangular area and built up mosaic-like out of separately carved blocks, is the most important motive but there is also a great use of geometric figures such as fret meanders, banded columns, and imitation diagonal lattice work. At Uxmal and Chichen Itza are found highly modified and scarcely recognizable examples of profile mask panels such as occur in realistic forms in earlier cities. Several of the large communal buildings show different stages of growth.

#### PERIOD OF MEXICAN INFLUENCE

1195 A. D. to 1442 A. D.

This period lies between the first serious outbreak of civil war under the league of the three cities and the final destruction of Mayapan about a hundred years before the Spaniards settled at Mérida. The civil war was begun by a warrior called Hunac Ceel and Chichen Itza was loser. This chief seems to have called for aid upon seven foreigners with Mexican names. These foreigners may have later acquired Chichen Itza as the spoils of war. There is no definite statement to this effect, but the architecture and art of Chichen Itza

show a great and sudden influx of new ideas that are characteristic of the Valley of Mexico. No other city of this region has so many of these intrusive features. An instance is the Great Ball Court with its connected temples. The ball court is found in many Mexican cities where it had a strong religious significance but it is absent from any of the great Mayan cities with the exception of Chichen Itza and Uxmal. Sculptures and hieroglyphs in the style of the Mexican highlands also occur in quantity at Chichen Itza. No one can state definitely the length of this Toltecan supremacy on Mayan soil, but it probably was not for long and possibly came to an end before the middle of the fourteenth century. The cities in the Valley of Mexico to which this intrusive culture is to be ascribed are those of the Toltecan period, such as Tula, Teotihuacan, and Cholula.

#### MODERN PERIOD

1442 to the present day

After the fall of Mayapan, the Mayas seem to have been divided into many warring factions. All the great cities were abandoned although the temples were still regarded as sacred. Of course, stone construction was still prevalent as we know from some of the Spanish descriptions of towns on the coast. Learning was still maintained by the nobles and the priests. But there was not the centralized authority necessary for the keeping of such luxurious capitals as existed in the old days. The Itzas, in part at least, returned to one of their ancient seats in the south, founding the island town of Tayasal in Lake Peten. Here Mayan culture was preserved until 1696. At the present time certain ancient ideas still persist as has already been stated in connection with the ethnology of the Lacandone Indi-



ans. Upon the western highlands there are preserved traditions which concern the Quichés, Cakchiquels, and other Mayan tribes, but the history does not go back for more than two hundred years before the Spanish conquest. All in all, there is little to be said in favor of the frequent plaint that the coming of the white man snuffed out a culture that promised great things. The golden days of the Mayan civilization had already passed, and, if we may judge by the history of other nations, would never have returned.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE LESSER CIVILIZATIONS

THE influence of the Mayan civilization when at its height (400 to 600 A. D.) may be traced far beyond the limits of the Mayan area. Ideas in art, religion, and government that were then spread broadcast served to quicken nations of diverse speech and a series of divergent cultures resulted. Most of these lesser civilizations were at their best long after the great Mayan civilization had declined, but one or two were possibly contemporary. It will be the aim in the present chapter to emphasize the indebtedness of these lesser civilizations to the Mayas as well as to comment upon their individual characters.

We will first proceed northwest into Mexico and then southeast into the Isthmus of Panama. The environment under which the Mayas developed their arts of life continues in narrowing bands westward along the Gulf of Mexico and southward across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The most westerly Mayan city of importance seems to have been Comalcalco. But there is also a large ruin near San Andres Tuxtla and it may be significant that the earliest dated object of the Mayas (the Tuxtla Statuette) came from this region. In other words, the cradle of Mayan culture may have been in this coastal belt where arid and humid conditions exist side by side and where the figurines of the archaic type are found together with those of the Mayas. Unfortunately, the archæology of this part of Mexico has been little studied and we are compelled to go farther up the coast, to the Totonacs or farther inland to the Zapotecs before we can find material for study.



Plate XXIII. General View of Monte Alban from the North. The mounds are arranged around courts in a very orderly manner.



**Zapotecan Culture.** In the state of Oaxaca the Zapotecan Indians attained to a high degree of civilization but a study of their art shows that they were greatly indebted to the Mayas for decorative motives. Monte Alban, the principal archaeological site in point of size seems also to be the most ancient. Stelæ are



Fig. 52. Comparison of Mayan and Zapotecan Serpent Heads. The first two examples are from Palenque and the second two from Monte Alban.

found at this city, as well as narrow vaulted chambers. The crest of a mountain overlooking the beautiful valley of Oaxaca is leveled and terraced and laid out in courts surrounded by pyramids. The sides of all structures are aligned with the four directions of the compass. The temples which once crowned the pyramids have fallen into ruin and only here and there is it possible to discern the outline of simple cell-like rooms that probably had flat roofs.

Unfortunately, no traditions have come down to us to help in the restoration of Zapotecan history. Although the art was pretty clearly derived from the Mayas it nevertheless developed some interesting characters of its own. Sculptured slabs are found in a number of localities besides Monte Alban, but only at this ruin are they *in situ* and of great size. The typical Zapotecan pottery is found at Monte Alban but the most elaborate forms are found at other and apparently later ruins. Zapotecan art in stone flourished in a restricted area and only one ruin outside the Valley



Plate XXIV. Detail of Monte Alban showing the Foundation Walls of Small Cell-like Rooms.

of Oaxaca offers striking similarities to it. This is the famous ruin of Xochicalco situated about five hours ride from Cuernavaca. Whether any historical connection ever existed between Monte Alban and Xochicalco must be decided by future exploration.

The hieroglyphs that are found on the stelæ of Monte Alban often strongly resemble those of the Mayas. The same use of bars and dots for numerals is to be

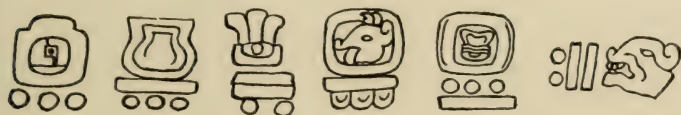


Fig. 53. Bar and Dot Numerals combined with Hieroglyphs on Zapotecan Monuments.

noted and it even seems possible to transcribe some of the signs into the Mayan system. Lintels with lines of hieroglyphs on the outer edge have been found at Cuilapa and Xoxo. Those of the latter site seem to have degenerated into meaningless decorative forms.

In Zapotecan funerary urns a close connection with Mayan art can easily be demonstrated. The urns are cylindrical vessels concealed behind elaborate figures built up from moulded and modeled pieces. Many of these built-up figures clearly represent human beings while others represent grotesque divinities or human beings wearing the masks of divinities. The purely human types have a formal modeling in high relief, the head usually being out of proportion to the rest of the body. The pose is ordinarily a seated one with the hands resting on the knees or folded over the breast. Details of dress are very clearly shown including capes, girdles, aprons, or skirts and headdresses. Necklaces are often worn with a crossbar pendant to which shells



Pottery, Plate XXV. Zapotecan Incense Burners, and Funerary Urns.



are attached. Headdresses are made of feathers and grotesque faces and are often very elaborate. As for the divine types the jaguar and a long-nosed reptile are the most common. The latter has a human body and may possibly be an adaptation of the Mayan Long-nosed God.

The funerary urns are found in burial mounds called *mogotes* which contain cell-like burial chambers. The urns are not found within these cells but on the floor in front of them, in a niche over the door or even on the roof. They are frequently encountered in groups of five and seem never to contain offerings.

Other Zapotecan pottery is mostly made of the same bluish clay used in the urns. This clay is finely adapted to plastic treatment but never carries painted designs. The pottery products include pitchers of beautiful and unusual shapes, dishes with tripod legs modeled into serpent heads, incense burners, bowls, plates, etc. Of the same clay are also made whistles in realistic forms, and moulded figurines. Painted pottery also occurs in forms and designs of rare beauty, but it is much less characteristic of the Zapotecan province than the unpainted ware.

Carved jades of splendid workmanship have been recovered in the Zapotecan region and there is reason to believe that this semi-precious stone was obtained here in the natural state. Many of the pieces are smoothed only on the front, while the back retains its old weathered and stream-worn surface. Beautiful examples of gold work have also been found in this region.

The ruins of Mitla are described in a later section since they came within the sphere of influence of the Aztecs. Codices ascribed to southern Mexico will also



Plate XXVI. (a) Sculpture of Stone of the Early Zapotecan Period showing Rulers seated upon Thrones before an Altar; (b) Jade Tablets pierced for Suspension, found in Zapotecan Tomb.

be considered at that time. It may not be out of place, however, to discuss briefly here the religion and time counts of the Zapotecans.

The high priests of the Zapotecans were called "Seers" and the ordinary priests were "Guardians of the Gods" and "Sacrificers." There was a sort of priestly college where the sons of chiefs were trained in the service of the gods. The religious practices included incense burning, sacrificing of birds, and animals, and letting of one's own blood by piercing the tongue and the ear. Human sacrifice was made on stated occasions and was attended by rites of great solemnity. The Zapotecs never went to the blood excesses that stain the annals of the Aztecs.

The 260 day cycle of the time count, was subdivided into four periods of 65 days and each period was under control of a single god and was associated with one of the cardinal points. Each period of sixty-five days was further divided into five groups of thirteen days for a ceremonial reason. Some authorities have considered that the general form of the Central American calendar originated in the region of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and spread to the north and to the south. But dependable history in the Mayan area goes back much farther than in the Zapotecan region and renders such a guess extremely hazardous.

**Totonacan Culture.** In the central part of the state of Vera Cruz are found the remains commonly referred to the Totonacan Indians. These Indians are southern neighbors of the Huastecas who are an outlying Mayan tribe. The Totonacan language is according to some authorities thrown into the Mayan stock. If not truly Mayan it contains many loan words. This apparent connection in language is all the more inter-

esting in view of the character of Totonacan art which also shows a strong strain of Mayan feeling and technique in certain products but an unmistakable likeness to the archaic art of the Mexican highlands in certain other products. The pottery faces in the archaic style are advanced beyond the average of such work and probably represent a late phase. It is possible to bring forward examples of every degree of transition from the



Fig. 54. The Eyes of Totonacan Figurines.

archaic style to the classical Mayan of Tabasco and Chiapas. Curiously enough, it does not seem possible to extend these linking likenesses to the Huastecas.

A series of eyes showing Totonacan modifications of the styles prevalent on the archaic pottery heads of the Highlands is given in Fig. 54. In some cases we find the simple single or double groove eyes and in other cases these eyes are made more conspicuous by the use of black bituminous paint. The eyeball is developed at the end of the series.

The smiling or laughing faces have a much higher technique and are perhaps the finest examples of clay modeling from the New World. These heads have tubular extensions at the back and were possibly set into temple walls. The faces and foreheads are broadened in accordance with the esthetic type of a forehead flattening people. While the faces vary so much in minor details as to create the impression that they are portraits of actual persons they are alike in method of modeling. Nearly all are laughing or smiling in a very contagious fashion. Sometimes the tip of the tongue is



caught between the teeth, sometimes the corners of the mouth are pulled down as if the smile were reluctant, and there are other individual variations in the expressions of lovely and unrestrained mirth.



Plate XXVII. Laughing Head of the Totonacs, remarkable example of Freehand Modeling in Clay. Heads of this type probably served as decorative details on temple fronts.

Perhaps the most famous objects found in Totonacan territory are the so-called "stone collars" or "sacrificial yokes." In size and shape these resemble horse collars, but in contrast to somewhat similar objects from



Plate XXVIII. (a) An Elaborately Carved Stone Collar, an Example of the Best Sculpture of the Totonacan Indians; (b) A Palmate Stone from the State of Vera Cruz. Two grotesque figures are holding snakes in their mouths.

Porto Rico they are usually open while the latter are closed. Nothing is really known concerning their use but there has been no lack of fanciful surmises. The most popular explanation is that the yokes were placed over the necks of victims about to be sacrificed. It is evident that the yokes were intended to be placed in a horizontal position because there is a plain lower surface and the ends are frequently carved with faces that are right side up only when the plain side is down. These yokes represent the richest and most elaborate works of art in the entire region since they are carved in the most finished manner from single blocks of exceedingly hard stone.

Other peculiarly shaped stones are found in the Totonacan area and are carved according to the same splendid technique. The "paddle-shaped" stones have been found in considerable numbers and their use, like that of the stone yokes is absolutely unknown. It is evident from the carving that they were intended to be stood on end.

The designs on the sacrificial yokes and paddle stones are largely reptilian, but there are examples where the turkey, the coyote, as well as the human motive are treated somewhat after the manner of the Mayas. In fact there can be little doubt that the best period of Totonacan art corresponded pretty closely to the best period of Mayan art. The most important site is Papantla where a remarkably ornate pyramid rising in six terraces may be seen, as well as massive sculptures in the same style as the works of art described above. The front wall of each terrace on all four sides of the pyramid, except for the space occupied by the stairway is divided into a series of niches neatly made of cut stone. Formerly each of these niches may have served to

shelter the statue of some god. Many fine remains of Totonacan art have been recovered from the Island of Sacrifices in the harbor of Vera Cruz. This island retained its ancient sacrificial character in the time of the Spanish conquerors. It is apparent, however, that the culture had already changed greatly if we may judge by the ruins of Cempoalan, the Totonacan capital in the sixteenth century. The art of this city is largely Aztecan.

**The Toltecs.** The first peoples to appear in Mexican history are the Olmecs and Toltecs. Tales of ancient splendor cluster about them, but there is a woe-ful lack of definite information concerning their origin and the extent of their dominion. Some authorities see in the Olmecs a Mayan tribe that once inhabited the region east and southeast of the Valley of Mexico and who were afterwards driven out. But it seems more likely that both the Olmecs and the Toltecs were tribes of Nahuatl rather than Mayan stock and that they were merely the first of the Highlanders to feel the quickening effect of Mayan contact. Both terms were probably generalized by the later nations far beyond their original significance. The Toltecs derived their name from Tula or Tollan, which was only one of several cities that flourished during the Toltec period. Whether all these cities were ever bonded into a political whole is a question that cannot now be answered.

Owing to the lack of a "long count" the dates in Toltec history are few and uncertain. The Mexican document with the longest range of history is the *Annals of Quauhtitlan* in which the count of years goes back in a practically unbroken series to 635 A.D. Still earlier dates are indicated. For instance, the legendary departure from Chiconoztoc, the Seven Caves, is



placed for the Chichimecas as 364 years ( $7 \times 52$ ) before their settlement in 687 at Quauhtitlan. An annotation on the manuscript reading: "6 times 4 centuries, plus 1 century plus 13 years, today the 22nd of May, 1558" has been taken to summarize the scope of the original. The "centuries" are of course the native "cycles" of 52 years and the total on this basis amounts to 1313 years which subtracted from 1558 would carry us back to 245 A.D.

While this chronicle concerns itself mostly with the lowly Chichimecas who did not become important until after the downfall of Toltecan power, still what purports to be a genealogy of the rulers of Tula is also given. From other sources, such as the writings of Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, we are able to gain a little additional light on some of the Toltecan chiefs. The person of Quetzalcoatl in this history is endowed with supernatural qualities and it is not unlikely that he was a great religious teacher. Of course, the name is also applied to one of the important deities and this fact has doubtless led to much of the confusion that exists. Under Huemac, the last of the Toltecan chiefs, witchcraft and human sacrifice appear to have laid the ground for oppression and war.

#### SUMMARY OF TOLTECAN HISTORY

- 726 Toltecs establish their government in Cuxhuacan.
- 752 Mixcoamacatzin is elected chief.
- 817 Mixcoamacatzin dies and is succeeded by Huetzin.
- 835 Huetzin dies and is succeeded by Ihuitimal.
- 843 The miraculous birth of Quetzalcoatl takes place.
- 870 Quetzalcoatl arrives at Tullanzinco and performs rites.
- 873 Ihuitimal dies and Quetzalcoatl is made ruler.
- 883 Quetzalcoatl, the lesser, dies. Temple building.
- 895 Quetzalcoatl dies and is succeeded by Matlaxochitl who moves the government to Tula.
- 930 Matlaxochitl dies and is followed by Nauhyotzin.
- 945 Nauhyotzin is succeeded by Matlacoatzin.
- 973 Matlacoatzin is succeeded by Tlilcoahuatzin.

- 994 Tlilcoahuatzin dies and the famous Huemac takes the power. The wicked magic of his queen.
- 1018 The great starvation takes place.
- 1058 Many strange things happen in Tula. The demons arrive.
- 1059 Two armies attack the population. Despotism begins. First sacrifice of nobles.
- 1063 War wages. The Otomies attack—the skins of slain warriors are first worn.
- 1064 Tula under Huemac is destroyed because of the wicked magic. The people disperse.
- 1070 The power of Tula broken completely, Huemac commits suicide in Chapultepec.

Some authorities shift the entire series of dates in this summary backward one 52 year period, making the first date 674 A. D. and the last one 1018 A. D. This seems unjustifiable in view of the continuous counting of every year in this chronicle down to the coming of the Spaniards in 1519.

Of course this summary does not actually cover the range of Toltec history. Such cities as Teotihuacan and Xochicalco may well have seen their prime before Tula became important while certain other populations such as Colhuacan, Atzacapotzalco and Cholula doubtless carried the civilization of the Toltecs down into times much later than the suicide of Huemac. Checking up Mexican dates with the more accurate chronology of the Mayas it may be pointed out that the period of Mexican influence in Northern Yucatan seems to have begun about 1200 A. D. The Mexican mercenaries who enlisted in the aid of Mayapan defeated the ruling house at Chichen Itza in the tenth year of Katun 8 Ahau, or about 1196 A. D. This date is 126 years after the recorded downfall of Tula, yet certain structural and decorative details of the buildings erected at Chichen Itza by these foreign overlords find their closest analogues at Tula. Other details point to the somewhat later epoch of Tezcoco. Curiously enough, no record of this far-reaching conquest seems to have been preserved on the highlands of Mexico.

Archæology tells a more convincing tale as regards the Toltecs than does history herself. In the stratified remains at Atzacapotzalco the objects made by the Toltecs overlies those of the first potters of the Archaic Period and are in striking contrast to them. The principal motives seen in Toltec decorative art owe an obvious debt to the earlier and more brilliant work of the Mayas.

The pyramids of the Toltecs exceed in size those of the Mayas, but are of inferior construction, adobe bricks with concrete facings taking the place of rubble and cut stone. The temples that crowned these pyramids were also of less solid character and no single example is now intact. Vaulted ceilings do not appear to have been used, but instead flat, timbered ceilings or high pitched roofs of thatch. Sometimes two or more columns were placed within the room to support the roof beams. The groundplans of buildings other than temples, show small rooms arranged in an irregular fashion around courts.

A ceremonial game that resembled basket ball was an important feature of Toltec religion. Two rings were set vertically in the walls that flanked a level space and the object of the game was to make the rubber ball pass through one of the rings. This sacred game spread far and wide. It was introduced into northern Yucatan and the most elaborate ball court of all was built at Chichen Itza. Another special feature of Toltec religion was the worship of the sun disk which was passed on to the later civilizations of Mexico, and which likewise was carried to Yucatan. Prayers are commonly represented in Toltec sculptures by the device of the "speech scroll" which issues from the mouth of the speaker and pictures forth what his desires are.





Plate XXIX. The Temple at Xochicalco before Restoration. The lower part of the picture shows the sculptured base of the temple pyramid. The walls of the temple itself are seen above.



**Xochicalco.** Let us now pass over in brief review several ruins which belong to the Toltecan period. Xochicalco, the House of the Flowers, is a large ruin near Cuernavaca. The position seems to have been chosen primarily for defense. The rounded ridge that drops off into deep valleys on either side is laid out in courts, terraces, and pyramids. Only one building offers evidence of the sculptural skill of the ancient inhabitants. It is a temple, standing upon a rather low platform mound. The sides of the platform mound are decorated with great plumed serpents, seated human figures, hieroglyphs, etc. Parts of the sculptures also remain on the low walls of the temples itself which is now roofless. The stone carving at Xochicalco resembles that of Monte Alban especially as regards the hieroglyphs.

**San Juan Teotihuacan.** The great ruin of Teotihuacan is located on the eastern margin of the Valley of Mexico. The principal features of Teotihuacan are two great pyramids and a straight roadway lined with small pyramids. There are also several groups of buildings of which the lower walls and the bases of the piers are still to be seen as well as some interesting fragments of fresco painting. The smaller of the two great pyramids is called the Pyramid of the Moon. It is located at the end of the roadway which is commonly called the Pathway of the Dead. The Pyramid of the Sun is situated on the east side of the roadway. This pyramid is about 180 feet in height and rises in four sloping terraces. The temple which formerly crowned its summit has entirely disappeared. Explorations conducted by the Mexican government showed that this pyramid was enlarged from time to time and old stairways buried under new masonry. On the



[a]



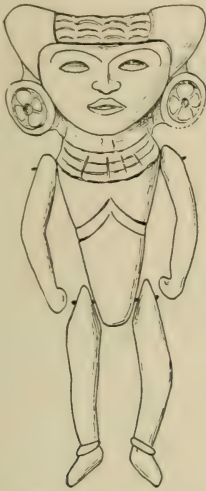
[b]

Plate XXX. (a) The Temple at Xochicalco after Restoration by the Mexican Government; (b) Partial View of the Great Pyramid at Cholula which Rises from the Level Plain in Three Broad Terraces. A Spanish church has been built upon the top of this pyramid and a roadway leads up the badly eroded mound.

south side of the small stream that flows through the ruins is a group of buildings called the Citadel.

A few large sculptures have been found at Teotihuacan. But the site is chiefly remarkable for pottery figurines and heads that are picked up by thousands. The heads present such a marked variety of facial contour and expression that it would seem as if every race under the sun had served as models. It is very

likely that these heads formed part of votive offerings, beings attached to bodies made of some perishable material. The heads were seldom used to adorn pottery vessels, although many modern and fraudulent vases are so adorned. Dolls with head and torso in one piece and with movable arms and legs made of separate pieces were known. The face of Tlaloc, the Rain God, is fairly common in Teotihuacan pottery but other deities have not surely been identified. It is not improbable that the God of Fire is personified as an old man with wrinkled face, and that Xipe, Lord of the Flayed, is represented in the faces that look out



• Fig. 55. Jointed Doll of Clay from San Juan Teotihuacan.

through the three holes of a mask. The jaguar, the monkey, the owl, and other animals are also modeled with excellent fidelity. The Mayan convention of the human face in the open jaws of the serpent is not unknown.

A number of beautiful vases painted in soft greens, pinks, and yellows have been recovered at Teotihuacan.

These colors would not stand the kiln and they were applied after the vessel had been burned. According to one method, the outside of the vessel was covered with a fine coating of plaster upon which the design was painted exactly as in fresco. According to a second method the effect of *cloisonné* was cleverly achieved. This technique is most characteristic of the region northwest of the Valley of Mexico and will be described later. Incised or engraved designs are commonly met with on pottery vessels at Teotihuacan.

**Tula.** The ancient city of Tula or Tollan, the Place of the Reeds, is situated about fifty miles north of Mexico City. Building stone of good quality was available at this site and in consequence sculptures are more plentiful than at Teotihuacan. Particularly famous are the great sculptured columns which represent feathered serpents and gigantic human figures. The drums are mostly mortised and the columns are crowned by true capitals. These architectural features at Tula find their closest counterpart at the Mayan city of Chichen Itza in northern Yucatan. The *tlachtli* or ball court occurs at Tula and the groundplans of complicated "palaces" can also be made out.

**Cholula.** The sacred city of Cholula, in the environs of Puebla, is chiefly famous for its great pyramid. This structure is more or less irregular in shape but the base averages more than a thousand feet on the side and the total height, now somewhat reduced, was probably close to two hundred feet above the plain. Compared with the Pyramid of Cheops, it covers nearly twice as much ground and has a much greater volume, but lacks of course, in height. As already noted, the pyramids of the New World are simply foundations for temples and thus always have flat tops. The great mound of Cholu-





[a]



[b]

Plate XXXI. (a) Pottery Plates from Cholula with Decorations in Several Colors. The pottery of Cholula ranks high in design and color; (b) A View at La Quemada. Cylindrical columns built up of slabs of stone supported the roofs of some of the structures. The use of columns was characteristic of late Toltecan times.

la is a solid mass of adobe bricks of uniform size laid in adobe mortar. The pyramid was evidently faced with a thick layer of cement of which a few patches still remain. Two other large mounds exist at Cholula. One of these has been partially destroyed and now stands as a vertical mass of adobe bricks while the other is overgrown with brush and cactus.

Unlike the other Toltecan cities Cholula was still inhabited and a place of religious importance when Cortez arrived in Mexico. But the figurines and pottery vessels that are found at this site belong for the most part to an epoch earlier than that of the Aztecs. Quetzalcoatl was the patron deity of Cholula and in the decorative art the serpent is finely conventionalized. A pottery shape frequently met with at Cholula is the flat plate bearing polychrome designs.

**The Frontier Cities of the Northwest.** An important culture area is located upon the northwestern limits of the area of high culture in ancient Mexico. The best known and most accessible ruin is La Quemada, "The Burned" which is situated a day's ride from the city of Zacatecas. This site was found in a deserted and ruinous condition by the Spaniards in 1535 and there is little doubt that it had been abandoned several centuries previous. La Quemada has been popularly associated with Chiconoztoc, "The Seven Caves," a place famous in Aztec mythology, but this association rests upon no scientific basis. It is simply an unauthoritative attempt to invest a forgotten city with a legendary interest. Chiconoztoc, where the Aztecs came out of the underworld might be compared with our own Garden of Eden and its exact location is just as much an eternal riddle. La Quemada is a terraced hill resembling Monte Alban and Xochicalco.

The retaining walls of terraces and pyramids as well as the walls of buildings are still well preserved. These walls consist of slabs of stone set in a mortar of red earth. Perhaps the most noteworthy structure is a wide hall containing seven columns built of slabs of stone in the same manner as the walls. All in all the architectural types as well as the observed contacts in art point to a late epoch of the Toltecan period. Other ruins of the same character as La Quemada occur at Chalchihuites on the frontier of Durango and at Totoate, etc., in northern Jalisco.

The most important artistic product from this north-western region is a peculiar kind of pottery which might be described as *cloisonné* or encaustic ware. Examination shows that this pottery was first burned in the usual way so that it acquired a red or orange color. Then the surface was covered with a layer of greenish or blackish pigment to the depth of perhaps a sixteenth of an inch. A large part of this surface layer was then carefully cut away with a sharp blade in such a way that the remaining portions outlined certain geometric and realistic figures. The sunken spaces, from which the material had just been removed, were then filled in flush with red, yellow, white, and green pigments. The designs on this class of pottery are thus mosaics in which the different colors are separated by narrow lines of a neutral tint. The geometric motives show a marked use of the terrace, the fret, and the scroll. The realistic subjects are presented in a highly conventionalized manner and have few stylistic similarities to the figures from the Valley of Mexico. Representative collections of this ware from Totoate, already referred to, and from Estansuela, a hacienda near Guadalajara are on exhibition.

*Cloisonné* pottery of a somewhat different style sometimes occurs at Toltecan sites in the Valley of



Mexico, such as Tula, Teotihuacan, and Atzacapotzalco, but fresco pottery which resembles it at first glance is more characteristic. It appears that the *cloisonné* process was taken over from the embellishment of gourd dishes in connection with which it still exists over a large part of Mexico and Central America (Michoacan to Guatemala).

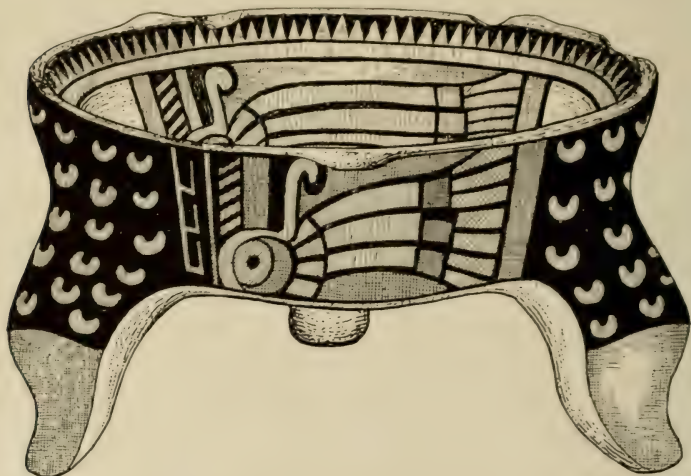


Fig. 56. Vessel with "Cloisonné" Decoration in Heavy Pigments. This example comes from a mound at Atzacapotzalco and apparently dates from late Toltec times.

Another process taken over from gourd decoration is that of negative painting. This likewise still exists as regards gourd dishes although discontinued as regards pottery. Negative painting appears to be an ancient process of exceedingly wide distribution. It is especially common in Jalisco and Michoacan, the Valley of Toluca, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia, and sometimes occurs in Yucatan and Peru. The process was to paint the design in wax or some



other soluble or combustible paint, then to cover the entire surface with a permanent paint. When the pot was burned the design came out in the natural color of the clay against a black, or sometimes a red field.



Fig. 57. The Turtle Motive as developed in Negative Painting with Wax at Totoate, Jalisco.

The design was often made two layers deep by applying simple masses of red over the sizing before the impermanent paint of the design proper was put on. In the northwestern region of central Mexico now under consideration the negative painting technique is associated with conventionalized designs representing tur-

tles (Fig. 57). Another ware with designs in white is concerned with derivatives of the turtle motive. Then there are the remarkable copper bells in the form of turtles made by coiling, that have been found in nearby Michoacan.



Fig. 58. Jaguar Head on Disk-Shaped Stone. Salvador.

It is difficult to place time limits for the artistic styles that once existed in this northwestern region. The archaic culture seems to have lasted longer here than farther south, next followed the northern flow of Toltecan culture which later receded and finally came a rather thin layer of Chichimecan or Aztec culture. We may tentatively con-

clude that the forgotten cities of the Zacatecan subculture flourished after 1000 A. D. The question should be settled because of its connection with the dating of Pueblo ruins farther north.

**Santa Lucia Cozumalhualpa.** The peculiar stone sculptures of Santa Lucia Cozumalhualpa and a number of adjacent sites in southern Guatemala and western Salvador have been accredited to the Pipiles, a southern Nahuan tribe. This local culture probably flourished long after the Mayan cities of the south had been abandoned and while the Toltecs in the north were at the height of their power. The art shows many fea-



Plate XXXII. Stone Slab from an Ancient Sepulcher in the State of Guerrero. The face at the top apparently represents a monkey, but serpents have been introduced between the eyes and the eyebrows. The other highly conventionalized faces are probably those of serpents.

tures similar to that of the Mexican highlands. Human sacrifice is prominently figured in the sculptures. There are also scrolls which issue from the mouths and stand for speech. Divinities are sometimes shown at the tops of the sculptured slabs in the mouths of reptiles and to these divinities the priests standing below make offerings.

A peculiar type of pottery centered in southern Guatemala and western Salvador from which region it was distributed far and wide by trade. Although a few examples of this ware are found at Copan it is clear from the designs that most of the pieces belong to a time subsequent to the abandonment of this Mayan city. The ware has a semi-glaze which is the result of lead in the clay. Because paint could not be applied to this ware, esthetic idea of shape was allowed to develop itself without hindrance.

**The Chorotegan Culture.** Passing south from the Mayan area we find in Salvador and Central Honduras archæological objects that can hardly be distinguished from the classical products of Copan. Still farther south remains are found of a rich and in many ways peculiar art—consisting almost entirely of pottery and minor stone carvings—that centers about the southern end of Lake Nicaragua and the Gulf of Nicoya. It may be ascribed principally to tribes speaking the Chiapanecan language and it may be fittingly called Chorotegan after one of the principal tribes.

Close analysis shows that many of the decorative motives in Chorotegan art were developed from those of the Mayas. The serpent and the monkey furnish the majority of the designs that are surely Mayan but each of these is carried so far away from the original that only an expert can see the connections. The arms



and legs of the monkeys are lengthened and given an extra number of joints while the heads degenerate into circles. The tongues of the serpents are elongated and

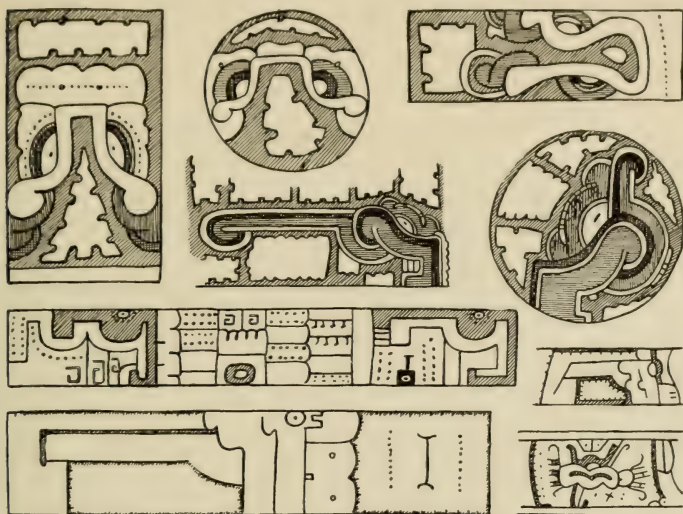


Fig. 59. Front View and Profile View Serpent Heads in Chorotegan Art. Although derived from Mayan models they have undergone great changes and have become highly conventionalized.

bent downward at the end. All the open spaces are treated with scallops or fringes of short lines.

There is also in Chorotegan art a crocodilian motive that may be peculiar to the Isthmian region although it has Mayan affinities. The jaguar is also important in this ancient art. Among the most interesting vases are those that have a modeled head projecting from one side (jaguar, monkey, or bird) and two of the three legs of the vessel modified into animal legs. On these elaborate vessels there are bands of painted decoration most concerned with the crocodile.

The extremely elaborate metates (stones upon which maize was ground) from southern Nicaragua and northern Costa Rica probably were made by the producers of the peculiar pottery art already described. These were

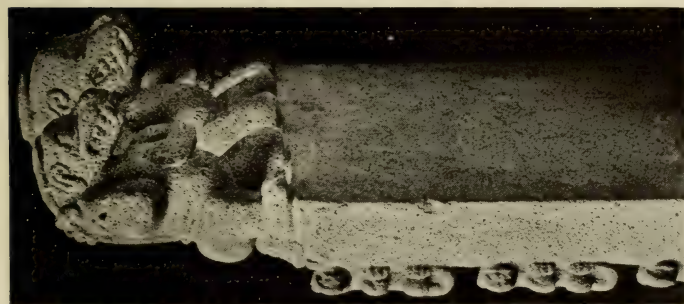


Fig. 60. Jaguar design associated with Figurines that still retain Archaic Characters. Costa Rica.

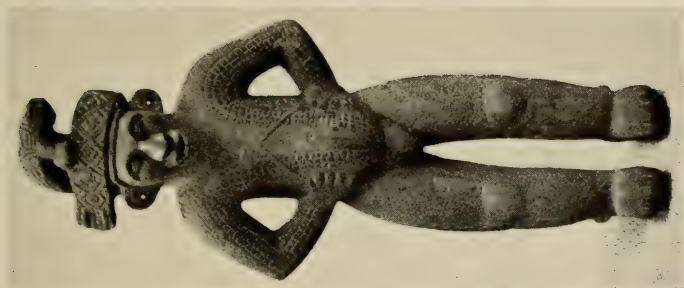


Fig. 61. Crocodiles from painted Nicoyan Vases.

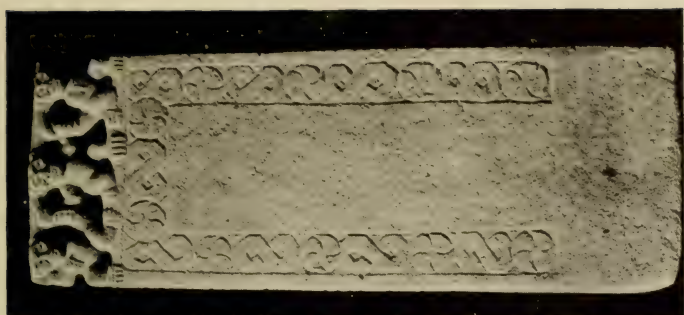
carved out of solid blocks of lava with stone tools. It is not unlikely that these elaborate metates were used as ceremonial seats since few of them show signs of use. The jaguar is perhaps the most common motive used in the decoration of these metates. The back is broad



[a]



[b]



[c]

Plate XXXIII. (a) Finely Carved Ceremonial Slab found at Mercedes, Costa Rica. The three large figures on the end as well as the smaller ones on the bottom represent crocodiles. Keith Collection; (b) Stone Figure from Costa Rica. This sculpture in lava rock is one of the finest pieces ever discovered in this region. The lines on the body probably represent tattoo marks; (c) Ceremonial Slab decorated with Monkeys. Mercedes, Costa Rica. These ceremonial slabs may be developments of metates or corn grinders. Keith Collection.



and slightly dished, the head projects from the center of one end and the tail swings in a curve from the other end to one of the feet.

At Mercedes remarkable stone slabs were found during the excavations conducted by Mr. Minor C. Keith. These are now on exhibition in the American Museum of Natural History. The sculptures in relief on these slabs are by all odds the finest from the Isthmian area. Human beings, crocodiles, monkeys and birds are all



Fig. 62. Highly Conventionalized Crocodile Motive. The principal features of the head as well as the outline of the leg survive in highly modified form. From the southern end of Lake Nicaragua.

used to decorate these carefully and laboriously made pieces whose use is entirely unknown. Statues in the full round have also been unearthed in quantity at Mercedes which gives every evidence of having been a large city with a long career.

We may be reasonably sure that the stone slabs date from a fairly late epoch because an undoubted "Chacmool" exhibiting the same style of carving has been discovered here. The "Chacmool," a half reclining figure with the knees drawn up, the body supported in part upon the elbows and a bowl for incense or other offer-



ings in the pit of the stomach, gets its fanciful name from Le Plongeon who discovered the original at Chichen Itza. But the unmistakable sculptures of this

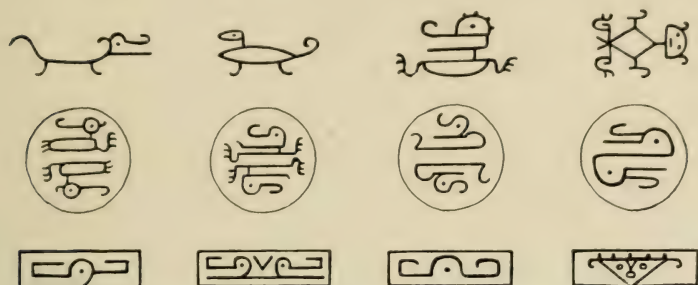


Fig. 63. Simple Crocodile Figures in Red Lines on Dishes from Mercedes, Costa Rica.

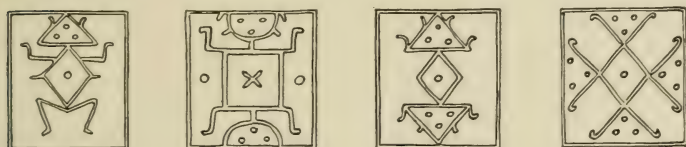


Fig. 64. Panels containing Crocodiles painted in White Lines on Large Tripod Bowls from Mercedes, Costa Rica.

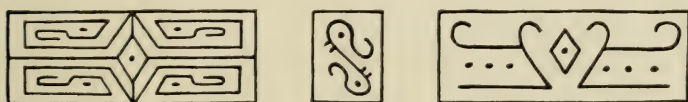


Fig. 65. Simplified Crocodile Heads in the Yellow Line Ware of Mercedes, Costa Rica.

type were apparently developed by the highland tribes and the cult was introduced into northern Yucatan during the period of Mexican influence. In addition to Chichen Itza examples have been found at Cempoalan,

the historic Totonacan capital near Vera Cruz, at Tezcoco, in the Valley of Mexico, at Jhuatzio in the Tarascan region, as well as at Ahuachapan far to the southeast in Salvador. All of these occurrences indicate a late Toltecan horizon for its distribution.

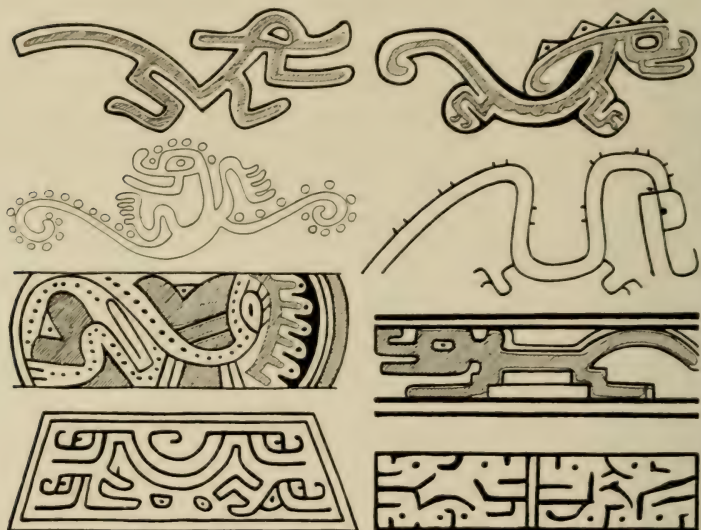
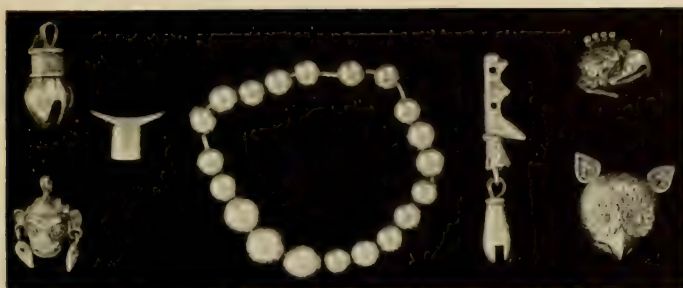


Fig. 66. Conventional Crocodiles from Costa Rica and Panama.

**Isthmian Gold Work.** The "wire technique" of the gold art of the Isthmian region, reflects, as we have seen, the pottery technique of the Archaic Horizon. In addition to plain and hollow casting, two kinds of gold plating were carried to perfection by the ancient metal workers: one a heavy plating over copper and the other a thin gilding. The manner in which this plating was done is still uncertain. It has been suggested that the molds were lined with leaf gold or sprinkled with gold dust before the baser copper was poured in. Many



[a]



[b]

Plate XXXIV. (a) The Gold Work of the Ancient Mexicans excited the Wonder of the Spanish Conquerors. Comparatively few examples, however, have come down to us; (b) Many Ornaments of Gold are found in the Graves of Costa Rica and Panama. The Keith Collection contains a very fine series of these pieces illustrating all the forms as well as the technical processes.



ornaments are of pure beaten gold and have designs in *repoussé*.

The gold objects are found in stone box graves along with pottery and stone carvings. Gold is taken from only a small percentage of the graves, probably those of chiefs. A systematic rifling of the ancient cemeteries has been going on since the arrival of the Spaniards, but the finds have mostly been thrown into the melting pot. The burial places are sometimes marked by low platforms built over a group of graves. An iron rod giving forth a hollow sound when the stone cysts are struck is used by the searchers. Human bones are found in these graves, but seldom in a state of good preservation.

Mr. Minor C. Keith's collection of gold work from Costa Rica and Panama is unexcelled and illustrates the range of technical processes as well as of ornamental forms. Human forms are represented with peculiar headdresses and with various objects carried in the hands and often they are joined in pairs. Many of the most beautiful amulets are frogs arranged either singly or in groups of two or three. These figures are all provided with a ring on the under side for suspension. Lizards, turtles, and crocodiles are frequently modeled as well as clam shells, crabs, and monkeys. But perhaps the most frequent amulets are those that picture birds with outspread wings among which may be recognized vultures, harpy eagles, gulls, man-of-war birds, and parrots. The larger and more elaborate pieces of gold work cast considerable light on the ancient religion of the natives since beast gods are figured in half human form. Bells of copper and gold were much used in gala dress and were doubtless an object of trade with the tribes farther north.

In this consideration of the lesser civilizations that



are mostly to be attributed to the stimulus furnished by the Mayas we have been carried forward in time until arrived at a point where tradition and ethnology begin to relieve the burden of proof that has hitherto been placed on archæology. We will now devote most of our attention to belief and ceremony as given first hand rather than to assumptions from art.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE AZTECS

**T**HE Aztecs were the dominant nation on the highlands of Mexico when Cortez marched with his small army to conquer New Spain. The horrible sacrifices that they made to their gods and the wealth and barbaric splendor of their rulers have often been described. But their history in point of time covered short space and their art and religion was based in a large measure on achievements of the nations that had preceded them.

**Mayas and Aztecs compared to Greeks and Romans.** A remarkably close analogy may be drawn between the Mayas and Aztecs in the New World and the Greeks and Romans in the Old, as regards character, achievements, and relations one to the other. The Mayas, like the Greeks, were an artistic and intellectual people who developed sculpture, painting, architecture, astronomy, and other arts and sciences to a high plane. Politically, both were divided into communities or states that bickered and quarreled. There were temporary leagues between certain cities, but real unity only against a common enemy. Culturally, both were one people, in spite of dialectic differences, for the warring factions were bound together by a common religion and a common thought. To be sure the religion of the Mayas was much more barbaric than that of the Greeks but in each case the subject matter was idealized and beautified in art.

The Aztecs, like the Romans, were a brusque and warlike people who built upon the ruins of an earlier civili-

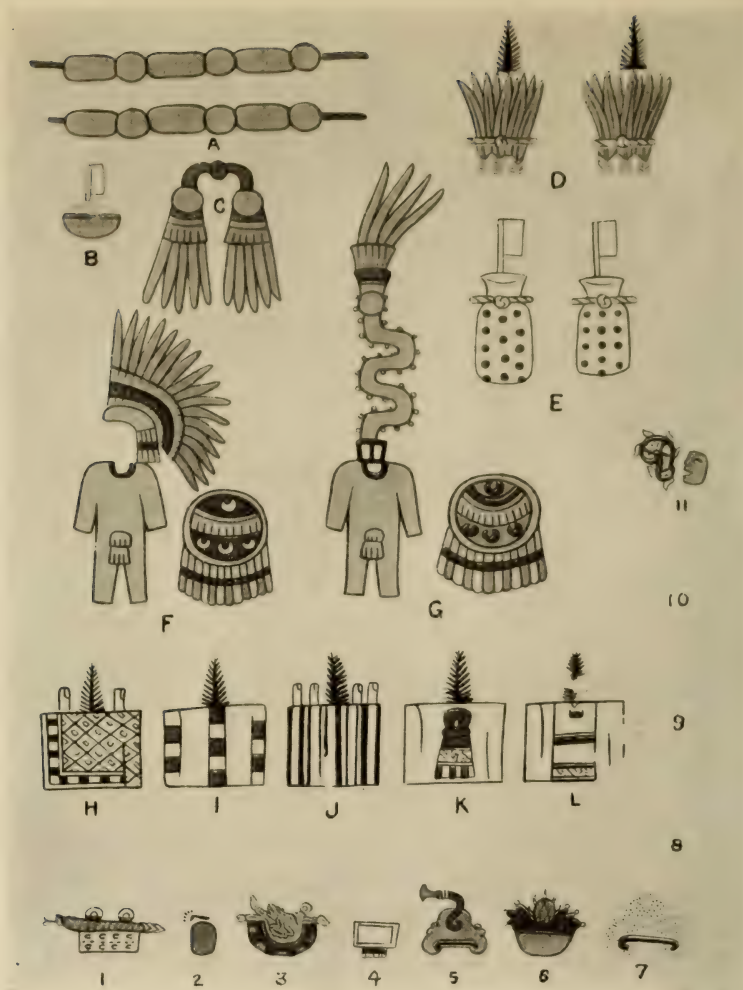


Plate XXXV. A Page from the Tribute Roll of Moctezuma, showing the Annual Tribute of the Eleven Towns pictured at the Bottom and Left. The tribute consisted of: (a) Two strings of jade beads; (b) Twenty gourd dishes of gold dust; (c) A royal headdress; (d) Eight hundred bunches of feathers; (e) Forty bags of cochineal dye; (f-g) Warriors' costumes; (h) Four hundred and two blankets of this pattern; (i) Four hundred blankets; (j) Four hundred and four blankets; (k) Four hundred blankets. The towns are: (1) Coaxalahuacan; (2) Texopan; (3) Tamozolapan; (4) Yancuitlan; (5) Tezuzcululan; (6) Nochistlan; (7) Xaltepec; (8) Tamazolan; (9) Mictlan (Mitla); (10) Coaxomuleu; (11) Cuicatlan, in the State of Oaxaca.



zation that fell before the force of their arms and who made their most notable contributions to organization and government. The Toltecs stand just beyond the foreline of Aztec history and may fitly be compared to the Etruscans. They were the possessors of a culture derived in part from their brilliant contemporaries that was magnified to true greatness by their ruder successors.

**The Chichimecas.** The term Chichimecas was applied by the more civilized tribes of the Mexican highlands to those nomads outside the pale who dressed in skins and hunted with the bow and arrow. Some of these wandering groups spoke Nahuan dialects, but the term was also applied to the Otomis who spoke a distinct language. Possibly through having been reduced in war certain of these wandering groups were drawn into civilization and when the Toltec cities began to decline, they advanced to considerable power and prestige. In fact, the Aztecs may be considered as originally Chichimecan, although several other tribes got an earlier start. In later times, these city-broken nomads looked back with considerable pride on their lowly origin.

The Chichimecan histories contain numerous genealogical lists of the ruling houses in different towns and settlements. The most valuable document is the *Annals of Quauhtitlan* that has already received some attention for its references to Toltec rulers. Quauhtitlan itself was confessedly one of the seats of the Chichimecas and its recorded history goes back to Chicontonatiuh who began his rule in 687 A.D. and died in 751. After the death of this chief there was an interregnum till Tactli formed a government in 804. He also had a long reign and the chronicle naïvely states:—



Plate XXXVI. Page from the Codex Telleriano Remensis showing a Native Manuscript with Explication by the Spaniards. The death of Chamalpopoca and the election of his successor, Itzcoatl, is recorded, as well as the capture of Atzacotzalco.

"In this same year (10 House, 865) died Tactli who was the king of Quauhtitlan where he reigned 62 years: he was a king unacquainted with the sowing of grain for food neither did he know how to make shelters for his subjects. He wore only a simple garb. The people ate only birds, serpents, rabbits and deer: as yet they had no houses and came and went in all directions." The early life in the open is pictured interestingly in several other documents including the Map of Tlotzin and the Map of Quinatzin.

We have already seen how the splendid culture of the Toltecan cities broke down under the weight of decadence and civil war during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D. To be sure, Cholula appears to have kept alive the flame of Toltecan religion and art up to the advent of the Spaniards. Perhaps Atzacapotzalco and other towns near the lakes that had been established during the Toltecan period were able to hold their own for a time against the newer order. But the sturdy Chichimecas made rapid progress. Tezcoco became their most prominent city only to be eclipsed by Tenochtitlan, the island capital of the Aztecs.

**Aztec History.** The history of the Aztecs has a mythological preamble in common with other nations of Mexico. The Chiconoztoc or Seven Caves must not be considered historical but simply man's place of emergence from the underworld. The general conception of an existence within the earth that preceded the existence upon the earth is found very widely among North American Indians. It is likewise impossible to locate the Island of Aztlan, that served, according to several codices, as the starting place of the Mexican migration. The northern origin for the Aztec tribe to which so much attention has been paid need not have been far

from the Valley of Mexico, since in their entire recorded peregrination they hardly traveled eighty miles.

Owing to the ineffectiveness of the Mexican time count Aztec chronology is far from fixed. The year was known by the day with which it began and as this day ran the permutation of four names and thirteen numbers the cycle was fifty-two years in length. No method of keeping the cycles in their proper order seems to have been devised except the laborious one of putting down every year in sequence whether or not an event occurred in it. Unfortunately, not even the latter method was used in any far-reaching chronicle except the Annals of Quauhtitlan. According to different authorities the year 1 Stone which marks the historical account in the Aubin Codex was 648, 1064, or 1168 in the European calendar, each date differing from the others by multiples of fifty-two years.

The wandering tribes, among which may be mentioned the Chalca, Xochimilca, Tlahnica, Huexotzinca, Tepaneca, and Azteca, pushed their way into the region of the lakes and made settlements in less desirable locations. Meanwhile, they served as vassals to the established tribes. The "peregrinations" relate the succession of stops and the length of each stop. The Aztecs themselves made twenty or more stops lasting from two to twenty years. Finally they took refuge on two islands in Lake Tezcoco and lived a miserable existence among the reeds. They joined with the Tepanecas and by yeoman service gained their aid and friendship.

The date for the foundation of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) is usually given as 1325. About 1350 water rights were gained at the spring of Chapultepec. This was an important gain because the brackish waters of the



lake were not fit to drink. A double water main of terra cotta was laid from the springs to the town. New land



Fig. 67. Pictographic Record of the Conquest of the Springs of Chapultepec, "Hill of the Grasshopper." Aubin Codex.

the famous floating gardens of Xochimilco by throwing the soil from the bed of the shallow lake into enclosed areas of wattle work. Gradually a Venice-like city, traversed by canals and admirably protected from attack, rose from the lake. At the coming of the Spaniards there were three causeways leading to the shores of the lake and each of these was protected by drawbridges. There was a city wall upon which were lighthouses for the guidance of homecoming fishermen. There were palaces and market places and a great central plaza called the Tecpan, where were situated the principal temples.

The Aztecs count their history as a great people from their first war chief Acamapichtli who commenced his rule in 1376 (Codex Aubin). The names and the order of the succeeding war chiefs is the same in several records, but the dates are found to vary slightly.

Acamapichtli	1376-1396
Huitzilihuitl	1396-1417
Chimalpopoca	1417-1427
Itzcouatl	1427-1440
Moctezuma I	1440-1469
Axayacatl	1469-1482
Tizoc	1482-1486
Ahuitzotl	1486-1502
Moctezuma II	1502-1520
Cuitlahua	1520
Cuauhtemoc	1520-1521

After throwing off the yoke of their early overlords, the Tepanecas, by the subjection of Atzacapotzalco at the beginning of the brilliant reign of Itzcouatl, the Aztecs of Tenochtitlan entered into a three-cornered league with Tezcoco and Tlacopan (Tacuba). This was an offensive and defensive alliance with an equal division of the spoils of war. Soon the united power of these three cities dominated the Valley of Mexico and began to be felt across the mountains on every side. Tenochtitlan gradually assumed the commanding position in the league, and although Tezcoco continued to be an important center the third member was apparently much reduced. The great votive stone of Tizoc records some of the earlier conquests of the Aztecs. At the arrival of Cortez only a few important cities such as Tlascala retained their independence. But the crest of power had then been passed and it seems pretty certain that the remarkable city in the lake would in time have suffered the fate of other self-constituted capitals both in the Old World and the New.

**Social Organization.** Spanish historians often liken Tenochtitlan to the seat of an empire and speak of the ruler as one who had the power of an absolute monarch while other and more recent writers have declared that the tribal organization of the Aztecs was essentially democratic. The truth doubtless lies between these extremes. The people were warlike by nature and all men, except a few of the priesthood, were soldiers. Honors depended largely upon success in war and warriors were arranged in ranks according to their deeds. The common warriors formed one rank and next came those who had distinguished themselves by definite achievements which gave the right to wear certain articles of dress or to bear certain titles. The chiefs were

elected for an indefinite term of office from the most distinguished fighters and could be removed for cause.

But while the offices of state were elective there was, nevertheless, a tendency to choose from certain powerful families and at least the foundation of an aristocratic policy. A chief was succeeded by his son or brother except when these candidates were manifestly unfit. In the actual succession of the great war chiefs of Tenochtitlan, a peculiar system seems to have been followed in that the candidates from the older generation were ordinarily exhausted before the next lower generation became eligible. Thus Huizilihuitl, Chimalpopoca, and Itzcoatl were all sons of Acamapichtli, and the last and greatest was born of a slave mother. Then followed Moctezuma Ilhuicamina I the son of Huitzilihuitl. This chief had no male heirs but the children of his daughter ruled in order: Axayacatl, Tizoc, and Ahuitzotl. Moctezuma II was the son of the first of these as was Cuitlahua, while Cuauhtemoc, the last Aztec ruler, was the son of Ahuitzotl. This peculiar succession was not in vogue in Tezcoco, where son succeeded father and the lawful wife was chosen from the royalty of Tenochtitlan. In the various annals, the genealogies are often indicated and the evidence that aristocracies existed is too strong to be overthrown. There are even cases of queens who succeeded to the chief power after the death of the royal husband.

It is extremely doubtful whether the Aztecs ever had what might be called clans. We have seen that there were originally eight closely related tribes constituting the Mexicani or Mexican nation. The Aztecs themselves are said to have been divided into seven groups that were first reduced to four or five and then increased to about twenty. It is not clear that these were

exogamic kinship groups. They were probably military societies taking into their membership all the men of the tribe. The name *Calpolli*, or "great house", which was applied to them seems to have referred to a sort of barracks or general meeting place in each ward or division of the city where arms and trophies were kept and the youth educated in the art of war. The title in land was held by the *calpolli* and the right of use distributed among the heads of families who held possession only so long as the land was worked. Each *calpolli* seems to have had a certain autonomy in governmental matters as well as a local religious organization. It is curious to find in Salvador, far to the south, the word *calpolli* applied to the platform mounds that surround courts in the ancient ruins. This use of the word may indicate that the "great houses" of the different societies were ordinarily the principal buildings of the city and that they were used for civil, military, and religious purposes.

In forming judgment on the fundamentals of social organization among the Aztecs we must remember that no clear case of kinship clans has been reported south of the area of the United States. Among the Cakchiquels, a Mayan tribe of the Guatemalan highlands, two royal houses are reported from which the ruling chief was alternately drawn. The Zotzils have been explained as a bat clan because their name is associated with the word for bat and because a bat god appears to have been their patron deity. The Mazatecas and Mixtecas, Deer people and Cloud people, also have clanlike names but in all cases these are designations of entire tribes, not of subdivisions of tribes.

Tenochtitlan was divided into four quarters and each quarter subdivided into a number of wards. An under



chief was elected from each of the subdivisions which are doubtless to be identified with the *calpolli*, and an over chief from each of the four quarters. Above these stood the war chief of the entire tribe who was likewise elected, but within the limits of a fixed aristocracy. A second great chief, who seems to have been a peace officer with some important relation to the priesthood, was nominally equal to the war chief, but practically much less powerful. The real center of the home government was a council made up of all the chiefs. In time of war the war chief was in supreme command and could either delegate his rights or act in person. Just how much the priesthood intervened in governmental affairs cannot be definitely put in words, but their power was doubtless great. Certain lands were cultivated in common for the officers of church and state and much of the tribute from conquered provinces was devoted to their needs.

**The Tecpan or Temple Enclosure.** The ceremonial center of Tenochtitlan has been transformed into the civic center of Mexico City. The Cathedral, the National Palace, and the Zocolo, or Plaza Major, mark the site where once stood the famous Tecpan or temple enclosure. Within the serpent walls, according to Sahagun, there were twenty-five temple pyramids, five oratories, sundry fasting houses, four bowl-shaped stones, one disk-shaped stone, a great stepped altar, a "star column," seven skull racks, two ball courts, two enclosed areas, a well, three bathing places, two cellar-like rooms, a dancing place, nine priest houses, a prison for the gods of conquered nations, arsenals, work places, etc. A native plan of the Tecpan, much simplified, occurs in the Sahagun manuscript. The great pyramid rose in several terraces and was surmounted by two temples each three stories in height, one dedi-

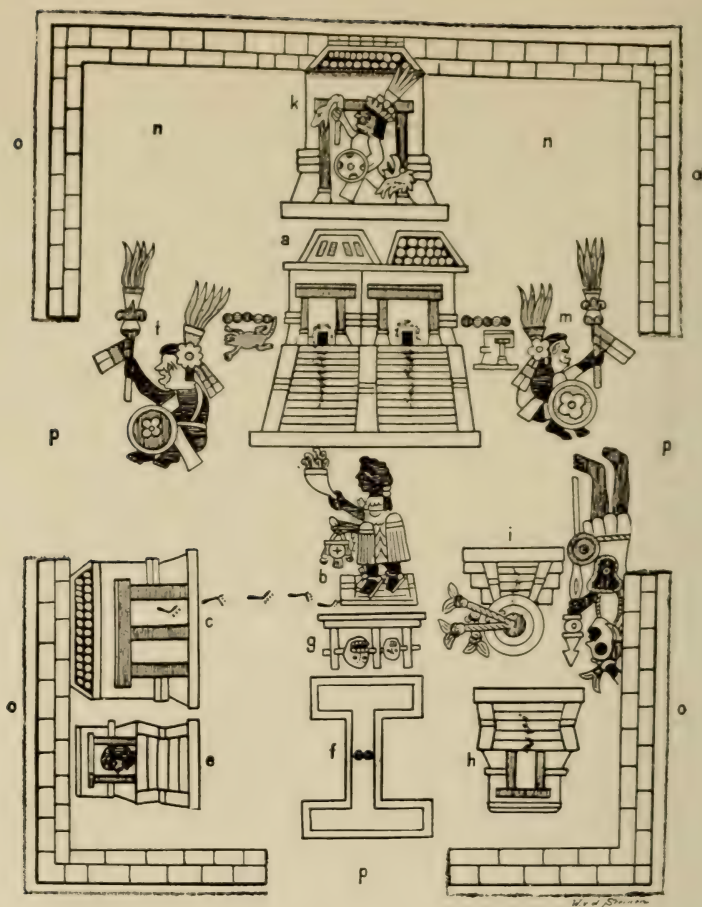


Plate XXXVII. Sahagun's Plan of the Tecpan in Mexico City. After Seler. Among the details shown are: (a) The two great temples; (b) the *Quauhtxicalli* or eagle bowl; (c) One of the *Callimecatl*, or priest houses; (e) An eagle house or warriors' shrine; (f) The *Teotlachtli* or ball court of the gods; (g) *Tzompantli* or skull rack; (h) The temple of Xipi; (i) The *Temalacatl* or Gladiator Stone; (k) The *Colhuacan Teocalli* or temple of Colhuacan; (l-m) The gods 5 Lizard and 5 House respectively; (n) Dance courts; (o) *Coatenanuitl* or Serpent Wall, so called because it was decorated with heads of serpents.

cated to Huitzilopochtli and the other to Tlaloc. Each temple contained an image of the god to which it was dedicated and a sacrificial altar. The walls were encrusted with blood of human victims whose hearts still beating had been torn out for divine food and whose bodies had been rolled down the steep flight of temple stairs. The foundations for the great pyramids were laid in 1447 by Moctezuma I, the pyramids were completed in 1485 while Tizoc was war chief and the final dedication ceremonies were held in 1487.

Several very interesting large sculptures and many minor objects have been unearthed on the site of Tecpan. In 1790 and 1791 were found three famous monoliths, the Calendar Stone, the Stone of Tizoc (Sacrificial Stone), and the Statue of Coatlicue. Since 1897 many fine pieces of pottery and several sculptures have been excavated near the Cathedral and placed in the Museo Nacional.

**The Calendar Stone.** The great sculptured monument known as the Calendar Stone or Stone of the Sun, is the most valuable object that has come down intact from the time of the Aztecs. It is a single piece of porphyry, irregular except for the sculptured face. It now weighs over twenty tons and it is estimated that the original weight was over twice as much. The sculptured disk is about twelve feet in diameter. This great stone was transported by men over many miles of marshy lake bottom before it could be placed in position in front of the Temple of the Sun in the temple enclosure that has just been described. It is believed to have been set up horizontally and to have served as a sort of altar upon which human victims were sacrificed. The stone was doubtless thrown down from its





Plate XXXVIII. The Calendar Stone of the Aztecs. This great stone represents the disk of the sun and the history of the world. It may be analyzed as follows, reading outward from the center.

A Central or cosmogonic portion: The day sign 4 Olin with details in the arms representing four epochs of the world; with the face of the sun god in the center and minor hieroglyphs that may represent the four directions just outside the Olin symbol.

B Band of day signs beginning at the top and reading towards the left.

C Bands of conventional rays of the sun and other details such as the embellishment of the sun with turquoise and eagle feathers.

D The outer circle of two great reptiles that may indicate the universe.

E Invisible edge of the disk bears representations of Itzpapalotl, the obsidian butterfly which is symbolical of the heavens.



original position by the soldiers of Cortez and may have been lost to sight. We know, however, that it was exposed to view about 1560 and was then buried by order of the archbishop of Mexico City lest its presence should cause the Indians to revert to their original pagan beliefs. It was rediscovered in 1790 and was afterwards built into the façade of the Cathedral where it remained until 1885, when it was removed to the nearby museum.

The Calendar Stone is not only a symbol of the sun's face marked with the divisions of the year but it is a record of the cosmogonic myth of the Aztecs and the creations and destructions of the world. In the center is the face of the sun god, Tonatiuh, enclosed in the middle of the symbol called Olin. Tonatiuh is often represented by a much simpler sign of a circle with four or more subdivisions resembling those of a compass which are intended to represent the rays of the sun. Olin is one of the day signs and means movement, or perhaps earthquake. It has also been explained as a graphic representation of the apparent course of the sun during the year. The history of the world, according to the Aztecan myth, is divided into five suns or ages, four of which refer to the past and one to the present. The present sun is called Olin Tonatiuh because it is destined to be destroyed by an earthquake. The day signs of the four previous suns are represented in the rectangular projections of the central Olin symbol beginning at the upper right hand corner and proceeding to the left. They are 4 Ocelotl (jaguar); 4 Ehecatl (wind); 4 Quauhtli (rain); 4 Atl (water), and they refer to destruction, first, by jaguars, second, by a hurricane, third, by a volcanic rain of fire, fourth, by a flood. It is claimed by some that the year 13 Acatl (reed) recorded at the top of the monument between

the reptile tails refers to the first year of the present sun, but according to others this is the year 1479 in which the sculpture was set up. Unfortunately, we have no record of this event. The fifth sun will end with the day 4 Olin, that is expressed in the central symbol already described. For this reason a fast was held on each recurrence of this day. Outside of the Olin symbol but between its arms are four hieroglyphs of uncertain meaning. Next to this area dealing with the great ages of the world comes a band of the twenty day signs of the Aztec month. Outside of this band are several others which probably represent in a conventionalized manner the rays of the sun and the turquoise and eagle feathers with which the sun disk was believed to be decorated. Finally, outside of all, are two plumed monsters meeting face to face at the bottom of the disk. In each reptile face is seen a human face in profile. These reptiles are probably to be identified as the Xuihcoatl or Fire Serpents.

**Stone of Tizoc.** The Sacrificial Stone or Stone of Tizoc is believed to have been carved by order of Tizoc, the war chief who ruled from 1482-1486, as a memorial offering to Mexican arms on the completion of the great temple to the Mexican God of War. The stone was a *quauhxicalli*, or "eagle bowl." This name was given to large bowls which were used to hold the blood and the heart of human victims sacrificed to the gods. The same name was extended to the large drum-shaped stone, under consideration, which has a pit in the center and a sort of canal running from the center to one side which may have been intended to drain off the blood. Human sacrifice actually took place on this stone but it is pretty certain that it was not one of the *temalacatl* or "gladiator stones" on which were staged mortal

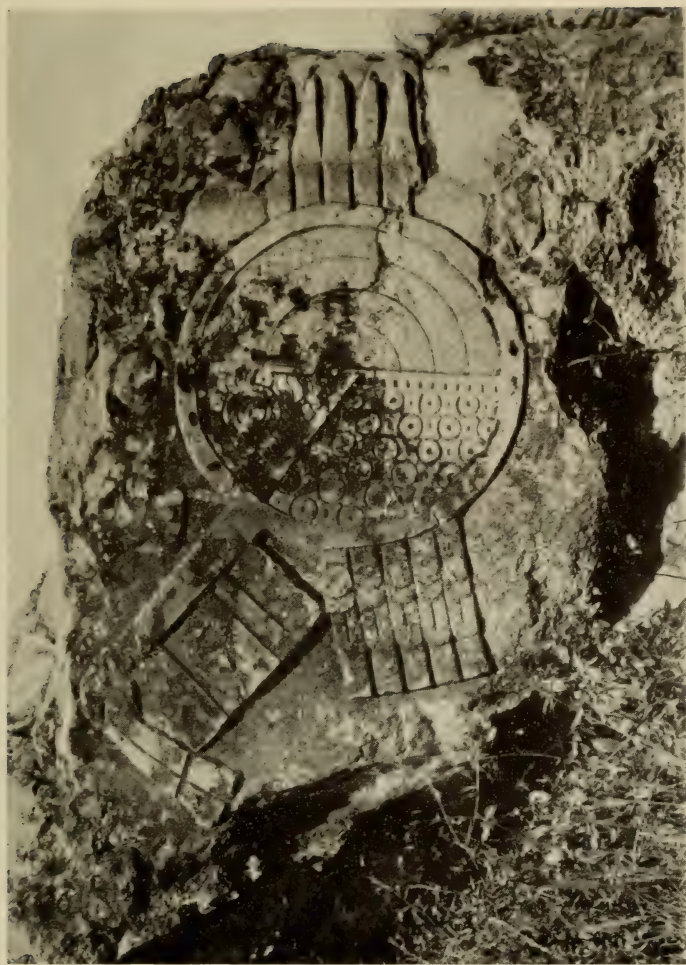


Plate XXXIX. The Shield Stone at Cuernavaca. This Aztec sculpture carved upon a boulder in the City of Cuernavaca shows a shield, a bundle of war arrows, and a war banner. The sculpture records the conquest of Cuernavaca or more properly Quauhnahuac, capital of the Tlahuican nation.



combats between captives. According to description the gladiator stones were pierced by a hole in the center so that one or more captives could be bound fast by a rope.



Fig. 68. Details from the Stone of Tizoc: *a*, Huitzilopochtli, Aztec War God; *b*, figures representing a captured town; *c*, name of the captured town (Tuxpan, place of the rabbits).

On the top of the Stone of Tizoc is a representation of the Tonatiuh, or sun's disk, much less complex than that which we have seen on the Calendar Stone but with many similar parts. On the sides of the stone are fifteen groups of figures, each group representing a conqueror and his captive. The victorious soldier appears each time in the guise of the war god, Huitzilopochtli, or his

wizard brother Tezcatlipoca. The left foot of the figure ends in two scroll-like objects that may represent the humming bird feathers that formed the left foot of Huitzilopochtli. But Tezcatlipoca also had a deformed foot. Moreover, on the side of the head-dress is a disk with a flame-shaped object coming out of it. This may represent the smoking mirror of Tezcatlipoca. The captive wears costumes that change slightly from one figure to the next. Over the head of the captive in each instance is the hieroglyph of a captured town or district.

Nearly all the place name hieroglyphs have been deciphered. The list is interesting historically because it gives the principal conquests up to the reign of Tizoc.





Plate XL. This Monstrous Sculpture represents Coatlicue, the Serpent-Skirted Goddess, who was regarded as the Mother of the Gods.

Starting at the side directly across the stone from the groove or drain we see that the figure of the victor has behind his head a hieroglyph that represents a leg. This is the hieroglyph of Tizoc and the victim in this case represents the district of Matlatzincó in the Valley of Toluca. This district was brought under subjection by Tizoc himself. Among the other conquered cities are such well-known ones as Chalco, Xochimilco, and Colhuacan in the vicinity of Lake Tezcoco and Ahuilizapan (Orizaba) and Tuxpan that are more distant.



Fig. 69. Detail showing the Construction of the Face of Coatlicue from Two Serpent Heads meeting End to End.

**Coatlicue.** The famous statue of the Earth Goddess, Coatlicue, "the goddess with the serpent skirt" is one of the most striking examples of barbaric imagination. The name Teoyamiqui is often given to this uncouth figure, but the identification is faulty. Like the other great sculptures we have just examined, it doubtless occupied an important place in the great ceremonial center of Tenochtitlan, but no ancient reference to it is extant. This goddess is reported to have been the mother of the gods.

The statue may be described as follows: The feet are furnished with claws. The skirt is a writhing mass

of braided rattlesnakes. The arms are doubled up and the hands are snake heads on a level with the shoulders. Around the neck and hanging down over the breast is a necklace of alternating hands and hearts with a death's head pendant. The head of this monstrous woman is the same on front and back and is formed of two serpent heads that meet face to face. The forked tongue and the four downward pointing fangs belong half and half to each of the two profile faces.

**Mexican Writing.** The means of record employed in Mexican codices are in part pictographic and in part hieroglyphic. The sequence of the historical



Fig. 70. Hieroglyphs of Precious Materials: left to right, gold; turquoise; mosaic of precious stones; *chalchihuitl*, or jade; mirror of obsidian.

events in these native manuscripts is often indicated by a line of footprints leading from one place or scene of action to another. Historical records of this type resemble old-fashioned maps and some are in fact known by this name. The places of towns in these documents are represented by true hieroglyphs and often the character of the country is indicated by pictures of typical vegetation, such as maguey plants for the highlands and palms for the lowlands. The day or the year in which took place the foundation of the town or whatever event is intended to be recorded is usually placed in conjunction with the hieroglyph or picture. Conquest is often indicated by a place name hieroglyph with a spear thrust into it.

A few examples of Nahuatl hieroglyphs will now be given to illustrate this interesting method of writing. It must be remembered that there is nothing in the nature of a connected narrative. The hieroglyphs or word pictures are limited to geographical and personal



Fig. 71. Aztec Place Names.

names, including the names of gods, to months, days, numbers, units of measure, and objects of commerce. Some of the signs are in no degree realistic and have a definite meaning by common consent alone, such as the symbol for gold (Fig. 70). Others are abbreviated and conventionalized pictures of objects. Thus the head of a god or of an animal frequently appears as the sign of the whole. But the most important and interesting



word signs are rebuses in which separate syllables or groups of syllables are represented by more or less conventionalized pictures. The whole word picture is made up of a combination of syllable pictures which



Fig. 72. Aztec Day Signs.

<i>Cipactli</i> Crocodile	<i>Ehecatl</i> Wind	<i>Calli</i> House	<i>Cuezpallin</i> Lizard	<i>Coatl</i> Snake
<i>Miquiztli</i> Death	<i>Mazatl</i> Deer	<i>Tochtli</i> Rabbit	<i>Atl</i> Water	<i>Itzcuintli</i> Dog
<i>Ozomatli</i> Monkey	<i>Malinalli</i> Herb	<i>Acatl</i> Reed	<i>Ocelotl</i> Jaguar	<i>Quauhtli</i> Eagle
<i>Cozcaquauhтли</i> Vulture	<i>Olin</i> Movement	<i>Tecpatl</i> Stone	<i>Quiahiutl</i> Rain	<i>Xochitl</i> Flower

indicate phonetically the word as a whole. Very often advantage is taken of puns on whole or partial words, while color and position are also employed to indicate sounds and syllables.

In Fig. 71 are given a few of the more common syllable pictures. The name of the object represented

is cut down by the elimination of *tl*, *te*, etc., that form the nominal endings. Thus, the picture of water, *atl*, becomes the sign for the sound *a*, that of stone *tell* is



73. Variant Forms of Aztec Day Signs: *a*, *acall*, arrow; *b*, *mazatl*, deer foot; *c*, *malinalli*, jaw bone; *d*, *itzcuintli*, dog's ear; *e*, *ozomatl*, monkey's ear; *f*, *ocelotl*, jaguar's ear.



Fig. 74. Aztec Numbers and Objects of Commerce: *a*, 1; *b*, 20; *c*, 400; *d*, 8,000; *e*, ten faces carved from precious stone; *f*, twenty bags of cochineal dye; *g*, one hundred bales of cocoa; *h*, four hundred bales of cotton; *i*, four hundred jars of honey of tuna; *j*, eight thousand leaf bundles of copal gum; *k*, twenty baskets each containing sixteen hundred ground cacao nibs; (*l*) four hundred and two blankets.

cut down to the syllable *te*. Several of these syllable pictures are combined to represent a whole word.

The hieroglyphs of the twenty days of the month are frequently represented, but those of the eighteen months are not nearly so well known. As for the gods, the faces are usually pictured, especially when these are grotesque, but sometimes

detail of dress or an object connected with a special ceremony is sufficient to recall the divinity. The Mexican system of numbers was based on twenties. The units were figured by dots, the twenties by flags, the four hundreds by a device like a tree that represented hair, and the eight thousands by the ceremonial pouches in which copal incense was carried.

### Aztec Religion.

The religion of the Aztecs, like that of the Mayas, was a polytheism in which special divinities controlled the powers of nature and the activities of men. The gods were perhaps further advanced towards human form and attri-



Fig. 75. Analysis of Mexican Record. 1, the year Two Reed, 1507; 2, eclipse of the sun; 3, earthquake at place pictured at 4; 5, the town of Huixachtitlan. In the temple (6) was held (7) the new-fire ceremony at the beginning of a 52-year period. In this year were also drowned in the River Tuzac (8) two thousand warriors (10) which the vultures devoured (9).

butes than were those of the earlier culture to the south, but definite characterization was still accomplished by grotesque features and certain animal connections were still evident. The situation is confused beyond the point of analysis. The mythologies often ascribe different

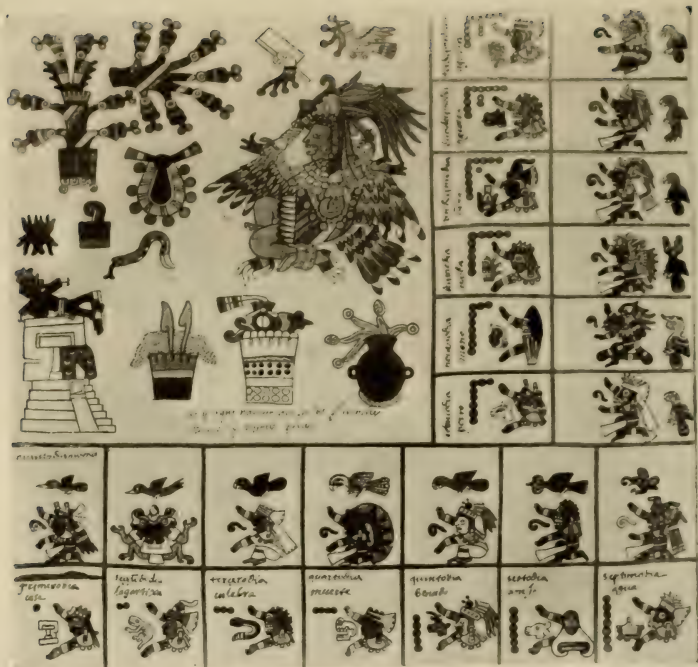


Plate XLI. Page from the *Tonalamatl* Section of the Codex Borbonicus. The thirteen days run along the bottom of the page and up the left side of the large division. The period covered is one-twentieth of the *Tonalamatl* of 260 days. At the left of each day is seen one of the nine Lords of the Night, so-called, in orderly succession. In the divisions above or to the left of the days are the thirteen gods of the Hours of the Day in connection with the Thirteen Birds. The patron goddess of this division of the *Tonalamatl* is Itzpapalotl, the obsidian butterfly. The other pictures relate mostly to mythological instances and the details of ceremonies. For instance, the broken tree represents Tamoanchan, a legendary site, and the sacrifice of twenty birds is indicated by the flag attached to the bleeding head of a decapitated bird.



origins to the same deity. One god is addressed by many names, descriptive or figurative, that are intended to bring out the various aspects of his power. Overlapping functions make it impossible to assign each god to his special province. There are universal gods, there are special gods, and there are patron gods of trade guilds. Moreover, there are foreign gods, some recent, some ancient.

The religion of central Mexico had its objective, ritualistic side, which appealed directly to the understanding of the masses, and its more subtle theological or philosophical side seen, for instance, in the poems written by priests and rulers. It was a mixture of spiritualism and the grossest idolatry. The ceremonial calendar, with a description of the feasts and sacrifices that occurred at different times of the year, has been preserved in a number of documents. Pageants, incense-burning, and human sacrifice gave a strong dramatic quality to the religious rites.

The conception of a supreme deity is seen in *Ometeuctli*, the Lord of Duality, a vague god head and creator who is sometimes addressed in some of the religious poems as the "Cause of All." In the background of the popular religion was the belief in the Earth Mother and the Sky Father and in the divinity of the Sun, the Moon, the Jaguar, the Serpent, and whatever else was beautiful, powerful, and inexplicable. Tezcatlipoca, by reason of his magic and his omniscience, was placed at the head of the pantheon of active gods, Huitzilopochtli was, however, the favorite god of the Aztecs through his relation to war. Taloc, the god of rain, was naturally of great importance to agriculturists living in a rather arid region. Tonatiuh, the Sun God, was a more or less abstract deity who



[a]



[b]

Plate XLII. (a) Pictures of Tlaloc, the God of Rain, and of Ehecatl, the God of Winds, in the Codex Magliabecchiano; (b) Mexican Genealogical Table on Maguey Paper. The names of most of the individuals are given by hieroglyphs attached to the head or the seat.

acted in part through other gods. But the list is too long to be repeated here.

The special gods of the four principal Mexican cities were as follows:—

Tenochtitlan	Huitzilopochtli
Tezcoco	Tezcatlipoca
Tlascala	Camaztli
Cholula	Quetzalcoatl

Of gods with a foreign origin perhaps the most important were Quetzalcoatl and Xipe. The former was introduced long before the Aztecs raised their banner of war and may have been an adaptation of the Long-nosed God of the Mayas. The worship of Xipe is said to have originated in a Zapotecan town but it had certainly taken a strong hold on the Aztecs of Mexico City and was likewise known to Nahuatl tribes as far south as Salvador.



Fig. 76. Chalchuihtlicue,  
Aztec Goddess of Water.

**Conceptions of the Universe.** Cosmogonic myths, the world over, are unscientific attempts to

explain the creation of the universe, to outline the powers of the gods and to trace the development of nature. The cosmogonic myths of Mexico and Central America are characterized by multiple creations. The Aztec belief in five suns each standing for a world epoch is paralleled in fragments of Mayan mythology. Creation is not emphasized so much as destruction. The

sequence of the suns is figured on the Calendar Stone, and in one of the codices, besides being explained in some of the early writings of Spanish priests and educated natives. The first sun was devoured by a jaguar and in the resulting darkness the inhabitants of the earth were devoured by jaguars. The second sun was destroyed by a hurricane, the third by a rain of fire, and the fourth by a flood. One human pair escaped each cataclysm and lived to repopulate the world. The fifth or present sun will be destroyed by an earthquake.

Notions of the shape and character of the universe are pretty well defined in Aztec lore. The widespread belief that the universe consists of three superimposed worlds, the upper or sky world, the middle world of living men and the under world of the dead, is found in a developed form. The upper world is divided into thirteen levels. The uppermost four levels are called *Teteocan*, the abode of the gods, and are considered to be invisible. The creator of all, *Ometeuctli*, Lord of Duality, dwells with his spouse in the highest heaven and under him in order are the Place of the Red God of Fire, the Place of the Yellow Sun God and the Place of the White Evening Star God. The inferior heavens, called *Ihuicatl*, are given over to the visible celestial activities. There is one heaven for the storms, another for the blue sky of the day, the dark sky of the night, the comets, the evening star, the sun, the stars, etc.

The under world is *Mictlan*, the Place of the Dead. More divisions are commonly given and in the lowermost of these lives *Mictlanteuctli*, the Lord of Death, and his mate. The idea of future blessing or punishment is not entirely absent from the minds of the



Aztecs. Warriors killed in battle go to the House of the Sun, in one of the upper worlds, as do women who die in childbirth. *Tlalocan*, the lowermost heaven, is a sort of terrestrial paradise for others. *Mictlan* is, however, the common abode of the dead, and the wretched soul can reach it only after a journey set with horrors.

The cult of the quarters is intimately associated with the concept of the universe. With the four cardinal points a number of others are sometimes taken including the zenith, the nadir, and the middle. The sacred numbers 4, 5, 6, and 7 may thus conceivably be derived from the points of space, but it would be very unsafe to assume that they are necessarily so derived. The general concept of a universe divided into quarters, fifths, or sixths is a powerful conventionalizing factor in mythology, religion, and art. Prayers, songs, and important acts are repeated in identical or in systematically varied form for each point of space. In Mayan and Aztec codices the symbolism of the four directions is often manifest.

**Ceremonies.** Ceremonialism was intensely developed in Mexico and the dramatic quality of many Aztec rites of human sacrifice has probably never been equaled. We are apt to think only of the gruesome features of human sacrifice and to overlook the spiritual ones. The victim was often regarded as a personification of a god and as such he was fêted, clothed in fine garments, and given every honor. Efforts were made to cause the victim to go willingly to his death uplifted by a truly religious ecstasy. It was considered unlucky that he should grieve or falter.

The religious calendar was given over to fixed and movable feasts. The fixed feasts were eighteen in

number and each came on the last day of a twenty-day period and gave its name to that period. These eighteen periods correspond roughly with the Mayan uinals or months, but since dates were rarely given in relation to them, they do not have the same calendrical importance. The five days that rounded out the 365-day year were considered unlucky.

Each of the eighteen feasts of the year was under the patronage of a special divinity and each had a set of ceremonies all its own. In some cases the ceremonies were really culminations of long periods of preparation. Thus, on the last day of the month, *Toxcatl*, there was sacrificed a young man, chosen from captured chieftains for his beauty and accomplishments, who for an entire year had been fitting himself for his one turn on the stage of blood and death. This intended victim, gayly attired and accompanied by a retinue of pages, was granted the freedom of the city. When the month of *Toxcatl* entered he was given brides, whose names were those of goddesses, and in his honor were held a succession of brilliant festivals. On the last day there was a parade of canoes across Lake Tezcoco and when a certain piece of desert land was reached, the brides and courtiers bade farewell to the victim. His pages accompanied him by a little-used trail to the base of an apparently ruined temple. Here he was stripped of his splendid garments and of the jewels that were symbols of divinity. With only a necklace of flutes he mounted the steps of the pyramid. At each step he broke one of the flutes and he arrived at the summit, where the priests waited, knife in hand, a naked man whose heart was to be offered to the very god he had impersonated. This ceremony is given only as an example, but it illustrates two characteristics that are

seen in several other sacrifices, namely, the paying of homage and honor to the intended sacrificial victim, and, secondly, the necessity of keeping the victim in a happy frame of mind.

The eleventh feast of the year was called Ochpaniztli, "the feast of the broom" and was celebrated in honor of the goddess known as Toci, or Teteoinnan. The first of these names means "our female ancestor" and the second one means "the mother of the gods." She was a goddess of the earth and her symbol was the grass broom with which the earth was swept. She also exerted an influence over the arts of the hearth, such as weaving. Her pictures in the codices show her with a broom in one hand and a shield in the other while about her head is a band of unspun cotton into which are stuck spindles wrapped with thread.

During this month the roads were repaired, the houses and plazas swept, and the temples and idols refurbished. According to the text in the Codex Magliabecchiano there were human sacrifices in the temples which fronted on the roads and there were great dances and carousals. Those sacrificed were afterwards flayed as in the feast of Xipe and their skins worn by dancers. The picture that accompanies this revolting admission is itself devoid of any morbid symbols. It shows a kneeling woman holding out the broom and shield. She wears a white dress and a necklace of jade beads with golden bells for pendants. Below her are two standing men who bear in their hands offerings of ripe fruit.

Sahagun gives details of a terrible drama that was enacted during this twenty-day month. For the first eight days there was dancing without song and without the drum. After this prologue a woman was chosen to

impersonate the patron goddess and to wear her characteristic dress and ornaments. With her was a retinue of women skilled in medicine and midwifery. For four days these persons divided in opposing ranks and pelted each other with leaves and flowers. While this harmless ceremony and others like it were being acted out, the greatest care was taken that the woman who played the rôle of the goddess and who was marked for death should not suspect her fate. It was considered unlucky, indeed, if this victim wept or was sad. When her time to die had come she was clothed in rich garments and given to understand that she should be that night the bride of a rich lord. And under such a beguiling belief she was led silently to the temple of sacrifice. There without warning an attendant lifted her upon himself, back to back, and her head was instantly struck off. Without delay the skin was stripped from her warm body and a youth, wearing it as a garment, was conducted in the midst of captives to the temple of the War God, Huitzilopochtli. Here in the presence of this mighty god the youth himself tore out the hearts of four victims and then abandoned the rest to the knife of the head priest. Thus closed the terrible drama which began with an innocent battle of flowers and ended in an orgy of blood.

The twelfth month passed under two names. It was called Pachtli after a plant with which the temples were decorated and Teotleco which signifies "the arrival of the gods." The principal feast was held, as usual, on the twentieth day when the great company of gods was supposed to return from a far land. One god, very youthful and robust, arrived on the eighteenth day, being able to outwalk the others, while a few very old and infirm divinities were late in getting to the feast.



The one who arrived first was called Telpochtli or Titlacauan but in reality he was the great Tezcatlipoca in disguise.

In anticipation of this return, the temples, shrines, and household idols were decorated with branches. The youths who did this work were repaid in corn, the amount varying from a full basket to a few ears. A novel manner of attesting the earliest presence of divinity is related. Some cornmeal was spread in a circular mass upon the ground. During the night the high priests kept vigil and visited from time to time this circle of cornmeal. When he saw a footprint in the center he cried out, "Our master has come." Then there was a burst of music and everyone ran to the great feast in the temple. Much native wine was drunk, for this was considered equivalent to washing the tired feet of the travel-worn gods. As a final act of the celebration there was a dance in costume around a great fire and several unfortunates were tossed alive into the flames.

Space will not permit a further examination of the eighteen fixed feasts. The movable feasts were mostly in definite relation to the *tonalamatl* and were thus subject to repetition every 260 days. The *tonalamatl* as represented in Mexican codices is in much more detail than in Mayan codices since every day is covered. The entire cycle is divided into twenty groups of thirteen days each and each group is presided over by a special divinity. There are other repeating series of gods, sacred birds, etc., that preside over the individual days in these groups. It seems likely that many of the ceremonies connected with the *tonalamatl* were of special rather than general significance like the celebration of Catholic saints days.

Other feasts were held in relation to longer time periods. There were important festivals held in connection with the planet Venus with especially elaborate ones falling at intervals of eight years. Still another ceremony was held at the completion of a fifty-two year period, when the set of years were figuratively bundled up and laid away and a new sacred fire lighted.

**Poetry and Music.** The languages of Central America were capable of considerable literary development. This is seen especially in the songs that were used in different religious ceremonies of the Aztecs, as well as in the reflective poems written by educated natives. Several very fine pieces have been preserved, and while there is no rhyme, there is much rhythm. When recited by a person speaking fluently the native tongue these poems are very impressive. Of course, translation is always hazardous, and fundamental differences in language, such as exist between English and Aztec, make it almost impossible. The most famous poet whose name has come down to us was Nezahualcoyotl, or Famishing Coyote, who was a ruler of Tezcoco and died at the advanced age of eighty years in 1472. A few verses from one of his poems on the mutability of life and the certainty of death have been translated as follows:—

All the earth is a grave, and naught escapes it; nothing is so perfect that it does not fall and disappear. The rivers, brooks, fountains and waters flow on, and never return to their joyous beginnings; they hasten on to the vast realms of Tlaloc, and the wider they spread between their margins the more rapidly do they mould their own sepulchral urns. That which was yesterday is not today; and let not that which is today trust to live tomorrow.

The caverns of earth are filled with pestilential dust which once was the bones, the flesh, the bodies of great ones who sate upon thrones, deciding causes, ruling assemblies, governing armies, conquering provinces, possessing treasures, tearing down temples, flattering themselves with pride, majesty, fortune, praise and dominion. These glories have passed like the dark smoke thrown out by the fires of Popocatepetl, leaving no monuments but the rude skins on which they are written.

Another example will serve to emphasize the strain of sadness and the vision of death that characterize so many Aztec poems.

Sad and strange it is to see and reflect on the prosperity and power of the old and dying king Tezozomoc; watered with ambition and avarice, he grew like a willow tree rising above the grass and flowers of spring, rejoicing for a long time, until at length withered and decayed, the storm wind of death tore him from his roots and dashed him in fragments to the ground. The same fate befell the ancient King Colzatzli, so that no memory was left of him, nor of his lineage.

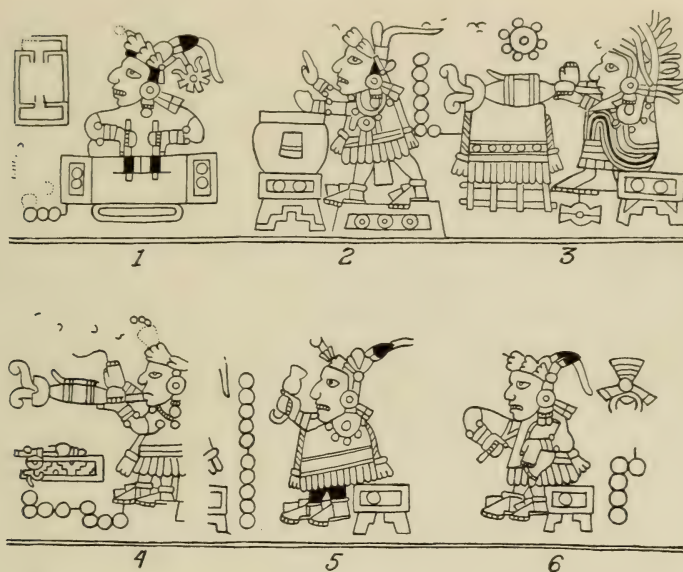


Fig. 77. A Mexican Orchestra: 1, log drum; 2, kettle drum; 3-4, flageolets; 5, gourd rattle; 6, turtle shell. *Manuscript du Cacique.*

The Aztecs held concerts in the open air where poems were sung to the accompaniment of the drum and other simple instruments. Songs were also sung at banquets and in the stress of love and war. The common musical instruments of the Aztecs vary but little from those



in use elsewhere in Mexico and Central America. There were two kinds of drums. One was a horizontal hollowed-out log with an H-shaped cutting made longitudinally on its upper surface so as to form two vibrating strips which were struck with wooden drumsticks having tips of rubber. The second sort of drum was an upright log also hollowed out and covered with a drumhead of deerskin. Conches were used for trumpets. Resonator whistles with or without finger holes were made of clay in fanciful shapes. Flageolets were constructed of clay, bone, or wood and flutes were made of reed. Resounding metal disks and tortoise shells were beaten in time. Many sorts of gourd and earthenware rattles were employed as well as notched bones which were rasped with a scraping stick. Copper bells of the sleigh bell type were exceedingly common. The marimba, however, that is such a favorite musical instrument today in Central America is doubtless of African origin and fairly recent introduction. No stringed instruments were known to the ancient Mexicans nor does the pan-pipe appear to have been used in this area although common in South America.

**Minor Aztec Art.** Some of the great sculptures of Tenochtitlan have already been described and references have been made to the native books painted in brilliant colors on paper and deerskin. Objects of minor art comprise pottery vessels, ornaments of gold, silver, copper, jade, and other precious materials, textiles, pieces of feather work, etc.

The best known ceramic products are made of orange colored clay and carry designs in black that sometimes are realistic, but more often not. The tripod dishes with the bottoms roughed by cross scoring were used to grind chili. Heavy bowls with loop handles on the



sides and a channel across the bottom were seemingly made to be strung on ropes. They may have held pitch and been used for street lights. The pottery figurines of the Aztec period are nearly all moulded and lack the sharp detail of the earlier examples. They often represent deities wearing characteristic dress and carrying ceremonial objects.

Comparatively few specimens of ancient gold work in Mexico escaped the cupidity of the Spanish conquerors, but these attest a remarkable proficiency in casting. The moulds were made of clay mixed with ground charcoal and the melting of gold was accomplished by means of a blow pipe. The technique seen in Costa Rican gold work according to which details falsely appear to be added by soldered wire, was followed in Mexico. Modern Mexican filigree bears little relation to the ancient Indian work, but is probably of Moorish origin. The examples of Aztec gold work include finger rings, earrings, noserings, labrets, and pendants.

Among the precious and semi-precious stones known to the Aztecs, the most valuable in their eyes was turquoise. This was probably obtained by trade from the Pueblo Indians. It was mostly cut into thin plates and used in the manufacture of mosaic objects. Red jasper, green jade, jet, gold, and shell of various colors was also used in these mosaics. Jade was highly prized and was known as *chalchihuitl*. Ornaments of obsidian, a black volcanic glass, and of crystal quartz, are fairly common and others of opal and amethyst have been found.

The textile decorations in vogue at the coming of the Spaniards can be restored from the pictures in codices. Mantles were often demanded as tribute and the de-

signs are given on the conventional bundles in the tribute lists. Garments with certain designs served as insignia of office for several of the priesthoods. Feather mosaic was highly prized and was made according to



Fig. 78. Mexican Blanket with the Design representing Sand and Water.

several methods. Capes as well as shields and other objects were covered with brilliant feathers so arranged as to bring out designs in the natural colors.

**The Tarascans.** The Aztecs while by far the most important tribe in the fifteenth century did not dominate all the surrounding peoples. For instance, most of the State of Michoacan was controlled by the Tarascans who defeated every expedition sent against them. The list of Tarascan towns is a long one but Tzintzuntzan which means the "Place of the Humming Birds" was the capital and principal stronghold. The ancient history of the Tarascans is little known. Although the archaic art was once credited to these people they do not appear to have been ever especially proficient in it. Mounds of peculiar T shape called *yatacas* are found in the Tarascan area. They rise in terraces and are faced with slabs of stone laid without mortar. Sculptures of fine quality are rare in connection with these remains and indicate a period of florescence during late Toltecan times, but the reclining god of the type made famous by the "Chacmool" of Chichen Itza has been noted. Many fine copper celts have been unearthed in this highly mineralized mountain region.

In the old days the Tarascans were skilled in weaving and were particularly famous for feather mosaics and feather pictures made largely of the brilliant plumage of humming birds. The use of the *atlatl* or spear-thrower survives among the present-day Tarascan Indians. These natives also make gourd vessels covered with colored clays in pleasing geometric and floral designs.

**Southern Mexico.** Somewhere about the middle of the fifteenth century Moctezuma I planted an Aztec colony at Uaxyacac on the edge of the Zapotecan territory to protect the trade route to Tabasco. This name gave rise to the modern Oaxaca. From this point expeditions were sent out which harrassed the Zapotecan towns to the south. In the Tribute Roll of Moctezuma II more than twenty Zapotecan towns are listed as paying tribute that consisted of gold disks and gold dust, jadeite beads, quetzal feathers, cochineal dye, fine textiles, etc. Very little is preserved concerning the traditional history of Southern Mexico, but it is presumed that the Zapotecan culture before the Aztec influence took place was a development of that implanted under the Mayan horizon and which we have already examined.

Some of the finest pre-Cortesian codices that have come down to us are probably of Zapotecan and Mixtec origin although reflecting to some extent the religion of the Aztecs. Several of these have been interpreted by Doctor Seler in terms of Aztec religion and art. Among the documents from southern Mexico that seemingly belong to the Aztec period are:—

Codex Borgia	Codex Féjervary-Mayer
Codex Vaticanus 3773	Codex Vindobonensis
Codex Bologna	Codex Nuttall

Several *lienzos* or documents written on cloth are also from this region. The Lienzo of Amoltepec which is a

fine example of this class is conserved in the American Museum of Natural History. The documents from southern Mexico are distinguished by details of geometric ornament that resemble the panels of geometric design on the temples of Mitla. They record historical

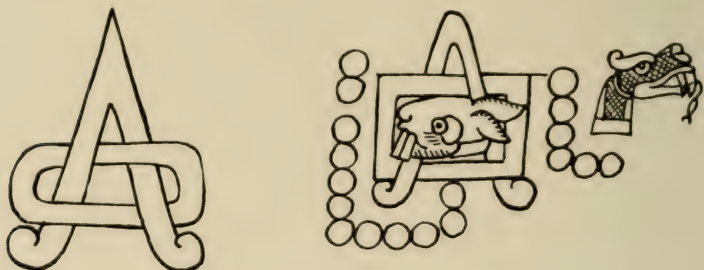


Fig. 79. A Year Symbol from Southern Mexico. It is combined with the four year bearers, House, Rabbit, Reed, and Stone. In the second detail the day 6 Serpent in the year 12 Rabbit is recorded.



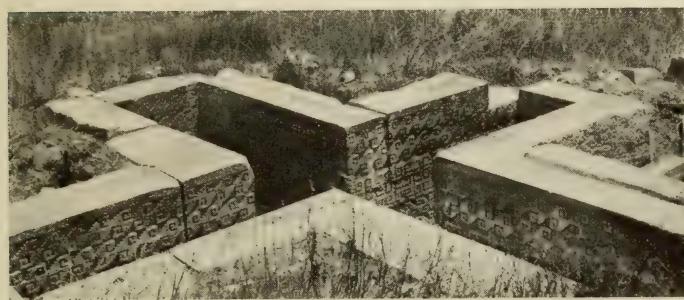
Fig. 80. Year Bearers in the Codex Porfirio Diaz ascribed to the Cuicatecan tribe: Wind, Deer, Herb, and Movement.

events, give astronomical information and present much pictographic evidence on various ceremonies and religious usages. In giving a date a somewhat different method is used than we have seen in the historical records from the Valley of Mexico. There is a definite year sign (Fig. 79) and with it is the year bearer, or initial day of the year, and often the particular day of the event. Unfortunately, this is not entirely satis-





(a)



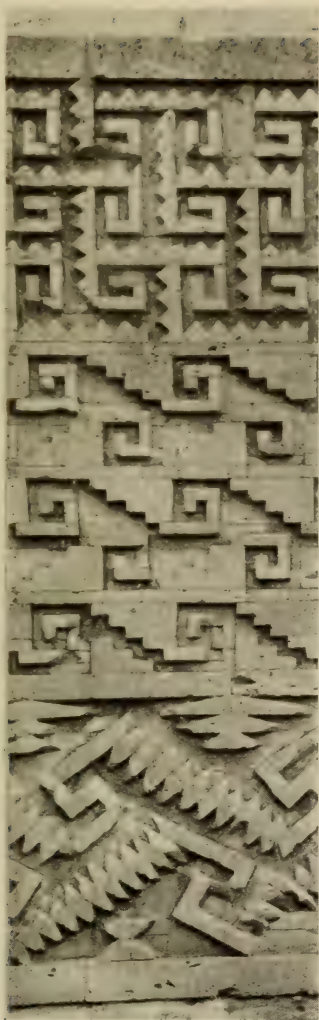
(b)

Plate XLIII. (a) A Page from the Codex Nuttall, recording the Conquest of a Town situated on an Island of the Sea. The conquerors come in boats and the conquest is indicated by a spear thrust into the place name hieroglyph. The crocodile, flying fish, and the sea serpent are represented in the water; (b) Zapotecan Cruciform Tomb near Mitla.

factory because no month signs are recorded and a day with a certain name and number frequently occurs twice in one year. The year bearers are the same as among the Aztecs for most of the documents, namely, Knife, House, Rabbit, and Reed, but in a manuscript ascribed to a tribe in southern Mexico called the Cuicatecs, the year bearers are Wind, Deer, Herb, and Movement (Fig. 80). Conquest of a town is shown by a spear thrust into the place name. Individuals are often named after the day on which they were born. Thus 8 Deer is a warrior hero in the Codex Nuttall and 3 Knife is a woman who also plays a prominent part. In some of the manuscripts from southern Mexico we see details that are very close to those in the codices of the Mayas.

**Mitla.** The famous temples of Mitla are the best-preserved examples of architecture on the highlands of Mexico. They are peculiar in form and decoration. The word Mitla is a corruption of the Aztec word *Mictlan*, place of the dead. This site was the burial ground of Zapotecan kings and may have been a place of pilgrimage. It seems to have been conquered by the Aztecs in the last decade of the fifteenth century. While the architecture belongs in a class by itself the frescoes have the distinct character of the Aztec period.

At this site we miss the lofty pyramids of Monte Alban. There is one fairly large mound at Mitla but it has no surviving superstructure. The temples are placed on low platforms which usually contain cruciform tombs. The buildings are carefully oriented and are assembled in groups of four which almost enclose square paved courts. The heavy walls have surfaces of cut stone and a filling of concrete or rubble and are orna-



(a)



(b)



(c)

Plate XLIV. (a) Detail of Wall Construction at Mitla, showing the separately Carved Stones; (b, c) The God Macuixochitl, Five Flower, as shown in a Mexican Codex and in pottery from Southern Mexico.



mented with longitudinal panels of geometric designs arranged according to a carefully worked out plan. The geometric patterns are entirely formal and are mosaics of separately carved stones which fit neatly together. The chambers are long and narrow and formerly had flat roofs which have completely vanished. The doorways are wide and low, usually with two piers. The lintels are blocks of carefully trimmed stone of great length and weight. All the outer surfaces of the Mitla temples seem to have been sized with plaster and painted red. The frescoes, traces of which can still be seen in several buildings, are in red and black upon a white base. Various gods and ceremonies are repre-

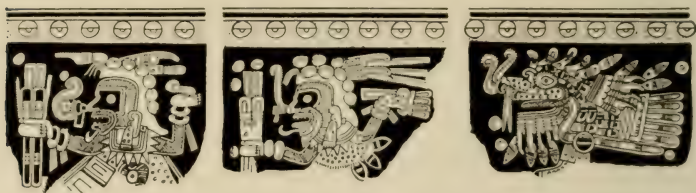


Fig. 81. Wall Paintings of Mitla, resembling in Style the Pictographic Art of the Codices.

sented, but only the upper portion of the bands, which show the heavens can be made out completely.

Cruciform tombs are found under several of the temples at Mitla as well as at a number of neighboring sites such as Xaaga and Guiaroo. In these tombs the designs in panels appear on the inside and are carved directly on large blocks of stone. Pottery remains are rare in the cruciform tombs of the Mitla type but a few examples of gold work have been discovered in them.

Within a short distance of Mitla is a fortified hill with several heavy walls that still stand to the height of perhaps twenty feet. In the flat valley between this hill



and the ruins a considerable number of potsherds are plowed up in the field.

**Aztec Influence in Central America.** The influence from the late Mexican cultures can be traced far to the south. In Salvador the cults of Tlaloc, Xipe Totec, and other Aztec gods were fully developed. The occurrence of the "Chacmool" in Salvador has already been pointed out and it may be added that the Mexican ball game, *tlachtli*, seems also to have been known here.

Decorative motives that show affiliations to those of the Aztecs and their immediate predecessors are found as far south as Costa Rica but the strain is thin and not to be compared with the evidences of culture connection over wide territories that are found on earlier horizons.

## CONCLUSION

This survey of ancient history in Mexico and Central America makes clear a fact that doubtless will be found to hold true of archæology in other parts of the world. The earliest culture was by far the most homogeneous and widespread which probably means that it lasted for a long time and modified slowly. At the same time it must be remembered that owing to the connection of this archaic art with agriculture, the initial spread may have been rapid. The Mayan culture that followed was specialized to a humid lowland environment and while the influence that it exerted over the life of other nations was very great the exact characters of the Mayan civilization were not reproduced elsewhere. The cycle of this civilization was comparatively short and that of the civilizations that followed were even shorter.

The debt which the world owes to these ancient civilizations of Mexico and Central America becomes apparent when we list even the more important of the agricultural plants and technical processes, fibers, gums, dyes, etc., which were taken over by Europeans from the American Indians. Special notice should be given to the following:—

### Food Plants Cultivated by American Indians

Maize	Pineapples	Cashew nut
Potatoes	Nispero	Pacay
Sweet potatoes	Barbados cherry	Jocote
Tomatoes	Strawberries	Star apples
Pumpkins	Persimmons	Paraguay tea
Squashes	Papaws	Alligator pear
Lima beans	Guava	Sour sop
Kidney beans	Arracacha	Sweet sop
Peppers	Peanuts	Custard apple
Cacao	Oca	Cassava

### Important Economic Contributions of American Indians

#### MEDICINES

Tobacco  
Cinchona (Quinine)  
Cascara Sagrada  
Cocaine

#### FIBERS

Cotton  
Henequen

#### DOMESTICATED ANIMALS

Alpaca  
Llama  
Guinea pig  
Dog  
Muscovy duck  
Turkey

#### GUMS

Rubber  
Copal  
Peruvian Balsam

#### DYES

Anil  
Cochineal  
Logwood

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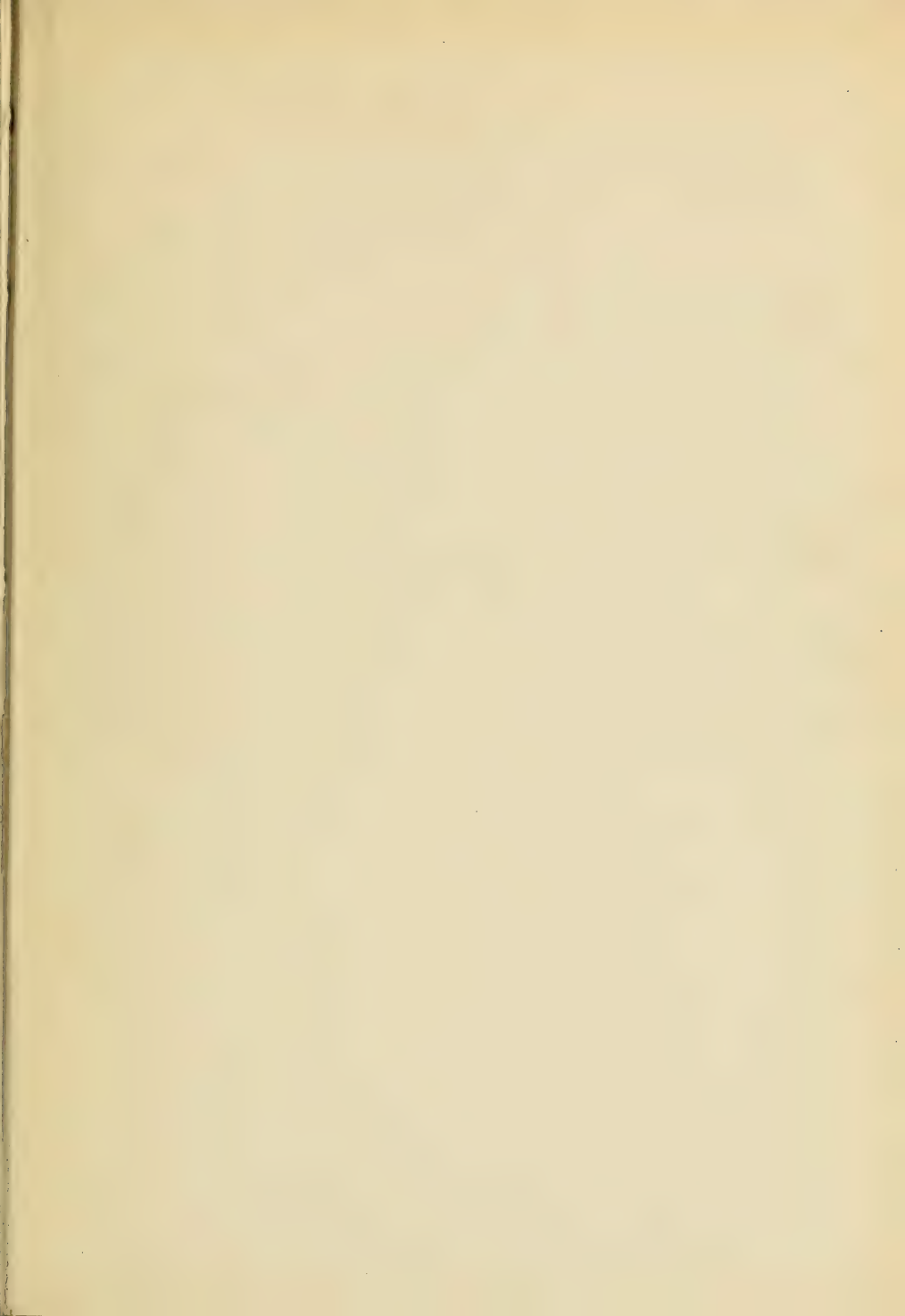
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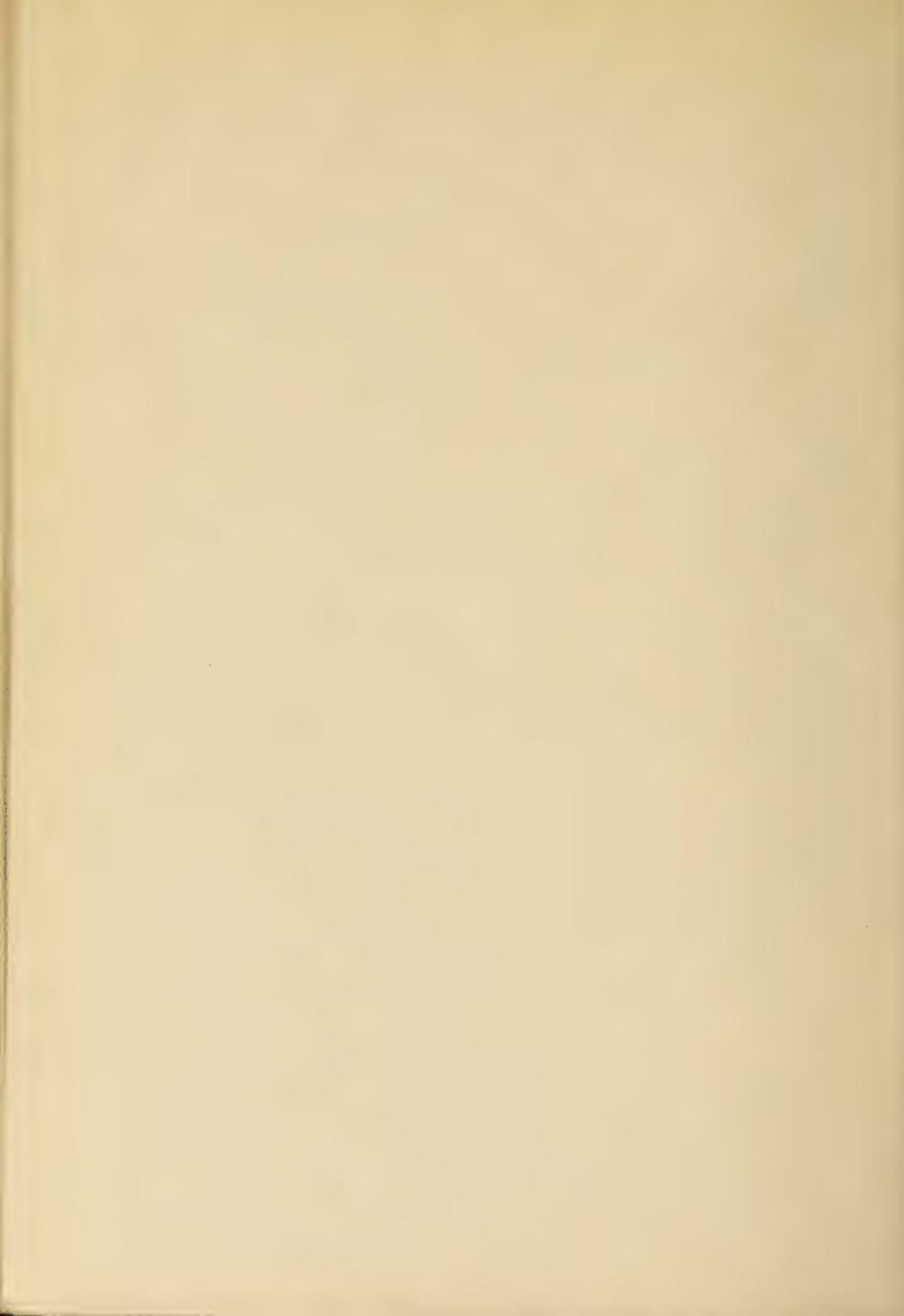
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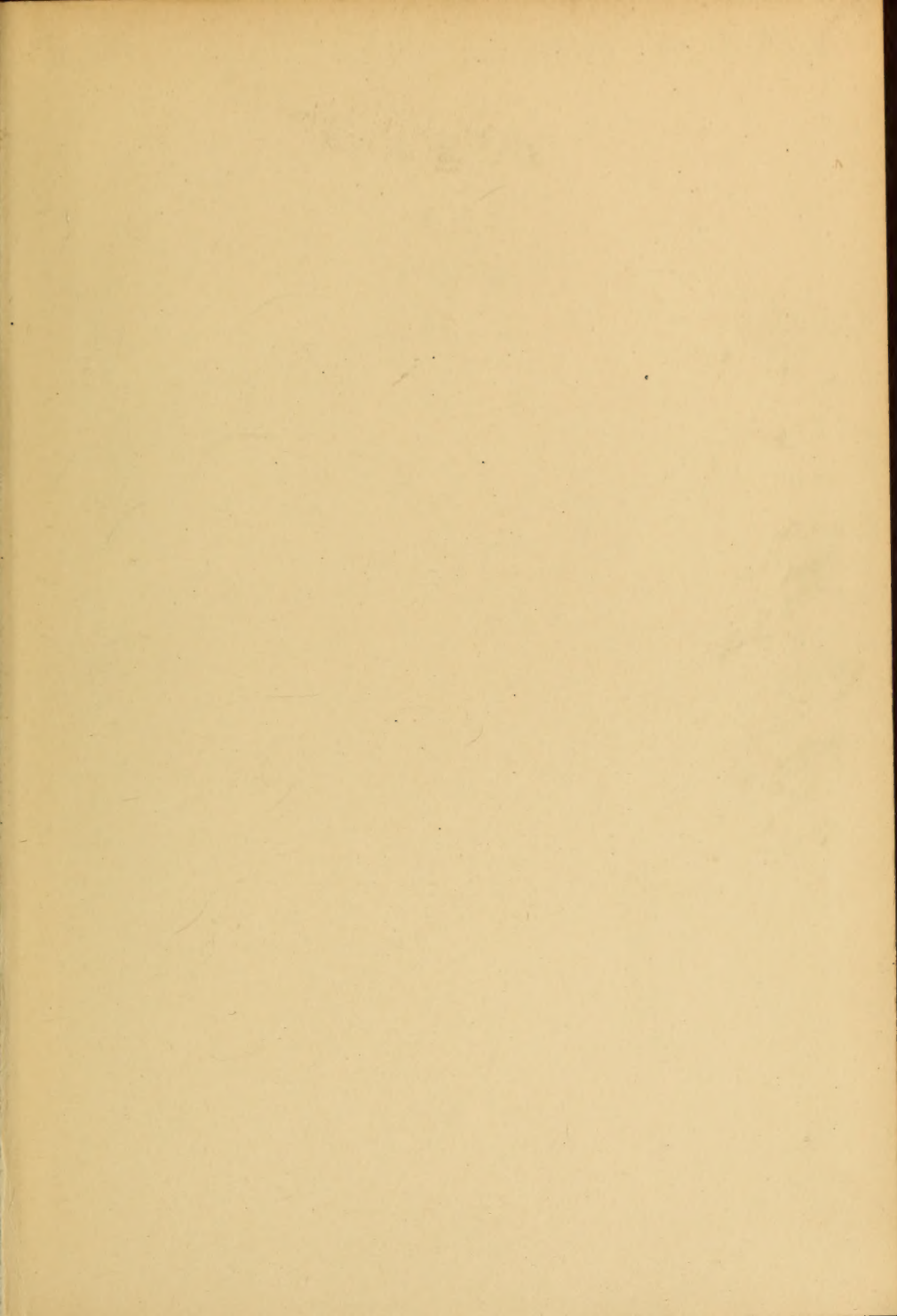
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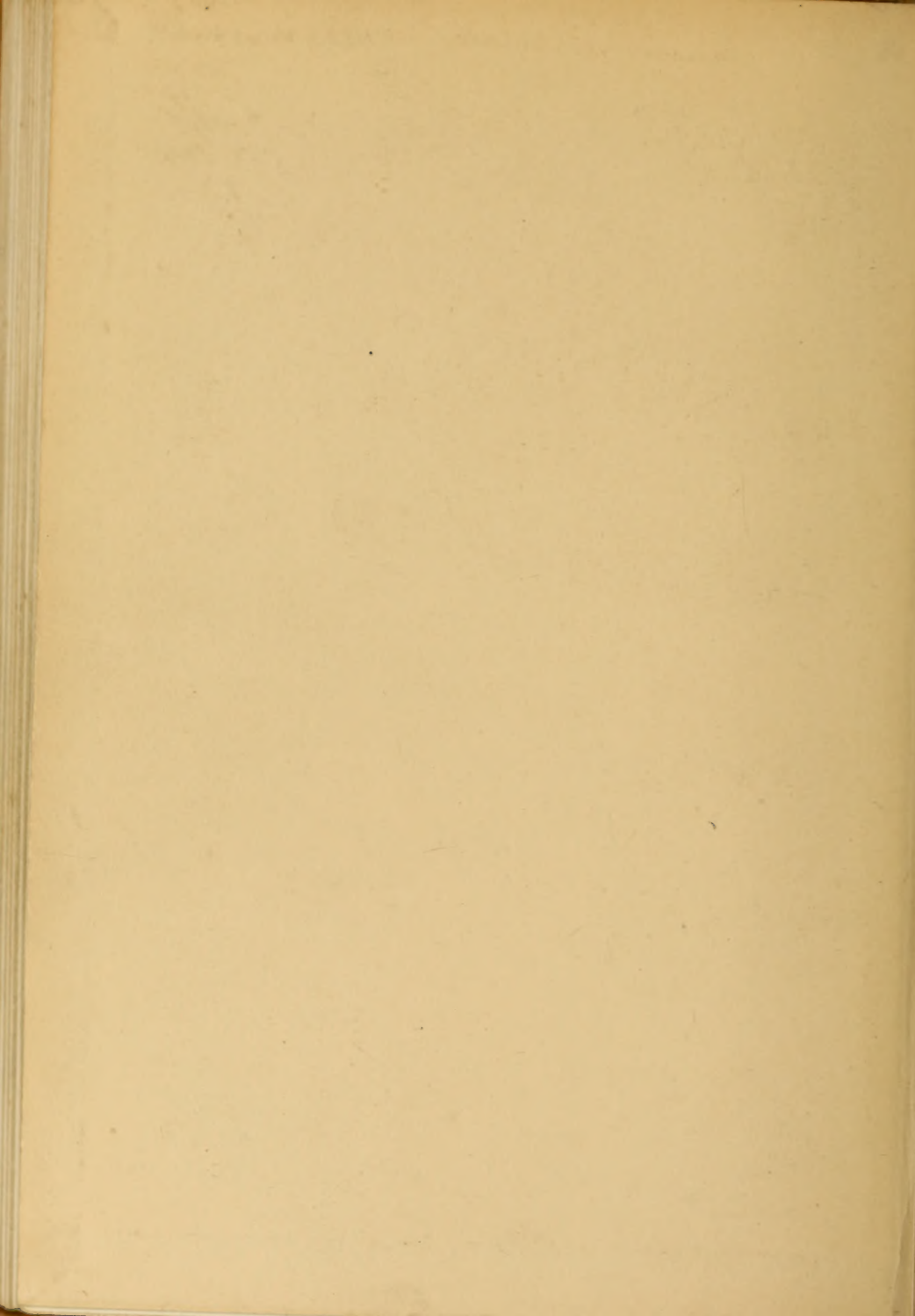
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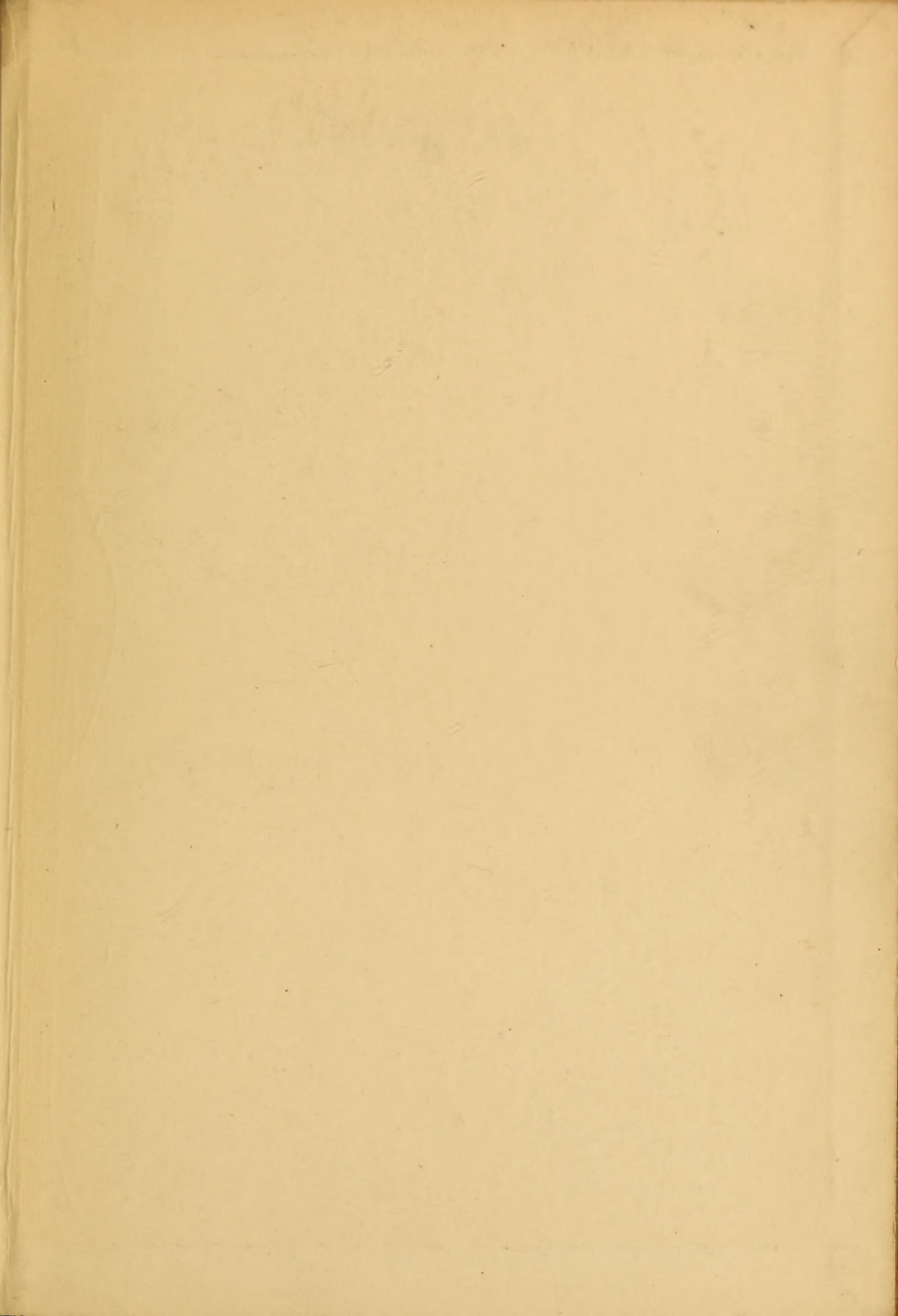












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